

THE HEAD
OF A
HUNDRED

THE HEAD OF A HUNDRED.



The
H·E·A·D·O·F·A·
H·U·N·D·R·E·D

Being
An Account of cer-
tain Passages in
the Life of Hun-
-phrey Hunton.
Esq^r Sometime
an Officer in
the Colony.
Virginia.



·E·D·I·T·E·D·B·Y·
Maud Wilder Goodwin.

·A·V·T·H·O·R·O·F·
"THE COLONIAL CAVALIER"



·B·O·S·T·O·N·
·L·I·T·T·L·E·B·R·O·W·N·&·C·O·M·P·Y·

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To A. G.

THE CRITIC ON THE HEARTH,

I Dedicate

THIS LITTLE ROMANCE OF COLONIAL DAYS.

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THE HEAD OF A HUNDRED.

CHAPTER I.

PHILLIDA FLOUTS ME.

WE had finished our journey. The safe harbor of Chesapeake Bay lay around us, and only one more night separated us from a new land.

It is ever a joyous and yet a solemn moment when a ship drops her anchor after a long voyage. 'T is like to waking from a dream. Life hath us once more in its clutches. We have come so far and strained our eyes so long to catch sight of this land; now we are arrived: but behold, close beside us sits that black care from which we sought to fly on canvas wings!

Captain Chester was keeping his midnight watch, according to his wont, on the "Margaret and John," though the shore lay full in view, and all

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was well; but a ship, he said, was like a child,—any one might care for it by day, but a mother and a master must be on guard by night.

By his leave I was sharing his watch this last night. We had sat long together without speech. The broad bay around us lay with scarce a ripple on its breast. Not a breath of wind was stirring. A single point of light on a low strip of land to the northward, told us that there lay the little settlement of Point Comfort. Everywhere else the shore was black with a dense growth of pines and cedars, whose fragrancy was borne to us across the still air of the April night. All about seemed new and strange — no, not all, for there above shone the same stars to which, as a boy in England, I had looked up in childish wonderment. There rode Charles's Wain and Orion with his belt, and high above all, the round moon, spreading a pathway of light from the ship to the shore.

Times like this set a man to thinking — and to remembering. I know not how long I sat thus steeped in mine own thoughts. When I woke to full consciousness I noted the captain's eyes fixed on my hand.

"'T is a ring of rare value that thou wearest. Methinks I have looked on it ere now, yet can I not say where."

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Truth to tell, 't was a ring that might well draw the eye of any man, and strangely ill befitting the finger of a poor soldier of fortune, like myself. A prince might have worn it, as indeed a princess had. Its stone was a star sapphire, milky, yet luminous, glowing now like the Northern Light, as the moonbeams fell full upon it. Above it was an arm dexter, holding a poniard, and the posy bore the words :

“ God be near thee,
On land and sea ! ”

The gem was set in massive gold, delicately inwrought and intertwined; on either side stood the initials, “ E. R.”

Her glorious Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, had bestowed it on mine uncle; yet it was not of her I had been thinking, but of another “ E. R.,” the queen and tyrant of my heart. I spake not the thoughts that were in my soul, but buried them under a careless manner, and answered lightly :

“ Belike thou hast seen it on the hand of mine uncle, Sir Humphrey Gilbert. He had it of Queen Bess, together with a golden figure of a lady guarding an anchor, as a token of her favor, and accompanied by a gracious message bidding him be of good cheer, for she wished him as good a voyage as though she herself were to be on his

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ship. Alas! The good wishes even of a queen avail little. It was on that very trip that the 'Squirrel' foundered off the Azores."

"Ay, and the noblest heart in England went down in her. I mind me well when it happened, though 'twas over thirty years ago; but how happened it that this ring perished not with him?"

"Why, he had no mind to risk such a treasure amid the perils of the seas, and ere he went on that fatal voyage he sent the golden image to Sir Walter Raleigh, his kinsman; and the ring he gave into the keeping of my mother, then a slip of a girl living in his house, saying that should aught befall him it was his will that the ring should be hers. Even so, in God's providence it fell out. She kept the ring always as a priceless treasure, and on her deathbed bade me wear it, until I should place it, as her bridal gift, on the finger of the woman I should wed. So, as I am little like to marry in this land of savages to which we are bound, the pretty bauble must e'en be content to tarry on my brown paw, instead of gracing the white hand of a lady."

Part of the bitterness of my spirit must, against my will, have found its way into my tone; for Captain Chester looked at me a moment, then

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laying his heavy hand on my knee, he said in his deep, kind voice:—

“Humphrey Huntoon, thou canst, maybe, doctor the body, but I could swear that thou hast thyself need of a physician of the soul. Something hath weighed upon thee since ever we set sail from London. Indeed, lad, methinks thou art not wise to keep it thus secret from the old-time friend of thine uncle. Next to a priest, there is no father-confessor so good as a sailor, for he hath no chance to blab, save to the waves and the clouds. Come, boy; out with thy secret, and then thou and I will bury it here in the deep bosom of the ‘Mother of Waters,’ as I hear the naturals have named this bay.”

It was ever desperate hard for me to confide in another. At school they were wont to call me “the tortoise” because, so they said, I but poked my head out of my shell now and then to see my way, and straightway drew it in again, if any one so much as looked at me. But now the darkness of night covered my shyness, and the kindness of the captain’s voice so opened my heart that I laid bare the grief that had been smouldering within me.

“’Tis the old, old story, captain, tedious as a twice told tale. ’Tis all summed up in few and

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brief words: 'He loved her — she loved him not.'

"Ay, then, 't is as I suspicioned; there is a woman at the bottom of thy trouble."

"Yea, a woman, and, O good father-confessor, such a woman! Why, Saint Anthony himself must needs have fallen down and worshipped her, as I did — fool that I was!"

"Not the first fool, by a thousand, nor the last by a million to yield to the bondage of a satin skin and a rose-pink flush. This sweet-heart of thine, I doubt not, is as fair in thine eyes as Venus and Dian together."

"Nay, father, not so fast! The confessor must not put words into the mouth of him who kneels at the confessional. I never said that Elizabeth Romney was fair."

I could have bitten out my traitorous tongue when I caught it thus letting slip the name which, for all these weeks, my heart had been saying over and over. But the mischief was done.

"The daughter of Sir William Romney," said the captain, "is entitled to some dower of stately beauty from her mother, as well as to a deal of beastly pride from her father."

"Thou knowest Sir William?"

"Only by rumor, which speaks not too well of

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him. An I mistake not, I have seen his name in the list of those who hold stock of the Virginia Company, and rumor saith he looks anxiously to a rise in its value to help his falling fortunes. But 't was of his daughter we were speaking."

"Yes," I answered, communing, if the truth were told, more with myself than with my companion, "— yes, of his daughter and her beauty. 'T is strange I ne'er before thought to ask if she were fair. To me she ever seemed a part of Nature. When I think of her I think of the freshness of the morning wind, and the clearness of the mountain-pool; yea, and sometimes of the brawling of the angry brook, for Mistress Betty is never twice in the same mood; but will play the stately dame and the spoiled child within the one hour. Yet ever, under all her quips, I fancied I could see a true and tender heart, and thus I forgave her all her foibles, — nay, to be honest, I think I but loved her the better for them."

"Hast known her long?"

"Ay, since ever I was a stripling in mine uncle's house, whither my mother and I came after my father's death. We grew up as boy and girl together there at Compton, down in dear old Devon. Romney Hall stands hard by mine uncle's place, separated but by a little stream, which flows

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between. On either side of this stream we have often stood, she and I, bandying childish jests.

"One day in particular I do recall, when she was but a tiny maiden. She scooped up the water from this brook in the cup of her chubby hand, and threw it in a shower over my new suit of puce-colored velvet with lace ruffles, which I had donned in honor of Sir Walter Raleigh, who was paying us a visit, on his way to London. 'T is a hard case when a lad is angry with a girl younger than himself. 'T is unmanly to conquer; 't is cowardly to yield. My youthful heart swelled with wrath; yet I spake no word. I gave her but one look and turned away. In an instant, heedless of her pretty slippers, she had waded through the brook and thrown her arms about my neck, begging, with sobs, to be pardoned for her silly trick."

'T is strange what lightness of spirit comes with the laying bare of a sore heart. Verily, a trouble half told is half healed. Here I, who had not been merry for months, found myself now smiling in the dark, as I talked of those pleasant days of old. Then, like a mourner ashamed that he hath forgot his grief, I caught up my melancholy once more.

"Well, well! All that is over and gone. If she loved me in those childish years (and I still think she did) she outgrew the foolishness soon enow.

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Yet, from time time, as she grew into maidenhood, she let drop some word, some hint, as tho' she would say, 'Perhaps!' but ere I could pry into the meaning of her words, her eyes gathered merriment, like as if they were laughing at the poor fool who allowed himself to be cheated thus.

"Once, ere I went to Oxford, I rode beneath her window. She, leaning out of the casement, did drop a sprig of lad's-love, which a moment before she had been holding to her lips; then, when I looked up, with my heart in my eyes, she slammed the window to, and a moment later I heard her calling her dog within."

"Tush, tush, lad! A woman's ways are like the maze at Hampton Court. If thou lose the clue, thou mayst wander round and round forever and be no nearer coming out. Why didst thou not ask her flat would she have thee for her husband?"

"Why not, indeed? Ah, therein lies the root of all my bitterness! When I had finished my studies at Oxford and got my degree as a physician and chirurgeon in London, I found myself with a scanty portion of a thousand pounds. Yet had I none the less high hopes of carving my way to fame and fortune, as other men have done from still lower estate. This did I write to Sir William

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Romney, and in the packet I enclosed a letter to his daughter.

"Therein I told her anew what she knew of old, that I loved her. I asked her not to share the fortunes of a poor adventurer. I did but seek a pledge that she would grant me a year and a day, and a promise that if by that time I had aught of success to lay at her feet, she would look on my suit with favor."

"It was done like thyself, Humphrey. What answer made she?"

"Answer! Oh, it makes me mad to think on't! She might have said me nay, and yet I would have gone my way, loving her like a knight of old, without hope of reward or return; but to be flouted and baited, and badgered and mocked, when I had offered her that poor thing, my heart, — oh, it was ill done!"

The instinct of my body to keep pace with my restless and turbulent soul led me to stride up and down the deck, striving to master the storm within me. When I took my seat again, Captain Chester drew me on to speak further.

"Perhaps," he said, "the maid was but the mouth-piece of her father. I hear of him everywhere as a hard, cold man."

"Oh! Ay, ay, ay!" I broke in, "I have

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said all that over and over to myself, like a mad-man, since ever I received Sir William's cool note of dismissal, enclosing the daughter's mocking lines; but whenever I would soothe my sore heart with the thought that she wrote it not of her own free will, my reason says: 'Tis false, and thou knowst it!' She would brave a thousand fathers if she really loved, and her will was crossed. I know, of course, that her refusal jumped with her father's wish. Since ever he hath been under royal disfavor and banished from court on suspicion of popish plots, he hath been striving and conniving, if so he might not wriggle back into power; and of late I have heard that he reckons his best chance to lie in marrying his daughter to that shining light of Protestantism, the Earl of Chetwynd."

"But if he is a papist, why should we seek to wed his child to a heretic?"

"Because the King's crown is closer at hand than the Pope's tiara, and, besides, Chetwynd hath real religion no more at heart than Romney. She to wed with him! Oh, I cannot brook the thought! Let her marry whom she will so it be an honest man,—but not that old hawk! Ill as she hath treated me, I could not bear that."

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"And art thou sure, *quite* sure, that she hath treated thee ill?"

The very softness of the Captain's words angered me, for 't was as if he were talking with one whose wits were wandering and who could not be made to hear reason till he had said his say. Stung by his doubts, I drew out from my jerkin, a square white packet, sealed with the Romney arms.

"See," I said; "'t is the sole scrap of her writing I e'er received, and, truth to tell, of such unpleasant reading, the less the better."

With this I flung the letter open before him.

"So, by way of forgetting your lady-love, you carry her letter on your heart!" said the captain, picking up the writing, with a smile.

"Perhaps," quoth I, ruefully, and paying little heed to his jibing, "'t is as well her answer finished the matter betwixt us; for now that our army is withdrawn from the Lowlands, and we are at cowardly peace with Spain, I find it not so easy a matter to open the oyster of the world with a sword's point, nor yet, I fear me, with a lancet's edge."

While I plunged along thus, Captain Chester had been spelling out the lines by the aid of the ship's light (a vile one). Anger gathered on his brow as he read.

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“Why, mark ye, Huntoon!” he said, as he puzzled over the paper, “the hussy that wrote those lines is na worth the paper she writes on. ’Tis the cheap trash caught at second-hand from the ladies of the court and their gallants — in rhyme, too! — why, that’s the worst insult of all! When the heart speaks, it uses honest prose, and not these silly quirks. ‘Her love,’ she says, ‘was never given to thee;’ and what’s this? — Oh, the insolence of a Romney bidding Humphrey Gilbert’s nephew seek a sweetheart of his own degree! I would I had her here, within reach of the cat-o’-nine-tails!”

As the captain waxed hot, I grew cool. Of a sudden, I began to wish, with a chill, that I had held my tongue.

“An it please thee, good Master Chester, we will talk no more of her,” said I, somewhat stiffly. “It is idle to seek to explain my feeling to one like thee, who never knew the hold that love, yes, even cheated love, hath on the victim’s heart.”

The next moment I would have given the world to call back those hasty words. I saw the captain’s ruddy face grow of a sudden white as ashes.

“Be silent, prating boy!” he gasped, fumbling at his neck-band, as though something hindered

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his breathing. For an instant he made as though he would take me by the throat; then he sank back, still striving to open his coat, that the bursting heart might find room for its throbbing.

"Pardon, old friend," I cried. "I meant naught, trust me, by my thoughtless speech, save that thou hadst been wiser than the rest of us, and never fallen victim to a foolish passion."

"'Tis I should ask thy pardon, Humphrey! There is no sight in the world more pitiable than an old man in a rage over a trifle. Forgive my roughness, and forget, if you can, my folly!"

Made bold by the kindness of his tone, I said: "Perchance thou, too, hast need of a father-confessor and of a soul's doctor."

"Ay," he answered, in a deep and sorrowful voice, "That have I — no man more!"

A long pause followed.

At last I said softly, "Is it some old love of thine own that my story brings back to thee like a ghost in this midnight hour?"

"Alas! With me 'tis no boyish folly, but a man's sin that sits heavy on my soul. Here will I confess it before thee and before my God, if haply I may purge my soul thus of some share of its guilt by warning another against the cherishing of hatred and bitterness.

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“Listen, Humphrey! When I was thine age, I was a callow stripling, free and bluff, as sailors ever be, trusting every man, and foolisher still, every woman, who bade me ‘God be wi’ ye!’ My hands were in and out of my pockets, while a crown or farthing was there, and I wore my heart on my sleeve.

“Well, there was a maid who dwelt in the little town where I grew up. Hers was no fiery spirit like that of thy lady-love. She was a timid, shrinking creature with an eye such as the dumb animal hath, that seems to speak and laugh and pray all through that one outlet. Frail she was, and soft and white as the rose which clambered to the thatch of her cottage. I loved her the more that she was so unlike me, and I now see that I was to blame that in so slight a nature I looked for so stubborn a virtue as constancy.

“One night — ’t was just before I sailed on a voyage to the Spanish Main — I walked with her along the cliffs at Ilfracombe. As we stood looking down on my ship, — the ‘Flying Hart,’ I mind me, was its name, — I asked her to be my wife when I should come back, and I pictured to her the bright future when I should be master of a vessel like the one beneath us, with a wee dark-eyed wife to bear me company on my voyages.

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We kissed and parted, and 't was agreed that our betrothal should be kept secret betwixt her and me, till I should come again, to claim her promise."

The captain's voice wavered, and then stopped short. He gulped hard, as tho' striving to swallow down some feeling too mighty for him.

"The 'Flying Hart,' " he went on at length, "was gone from England for three years. The other sailors had sweethearts in every port we touched ; but I never gave a thought to any woman but her. Each night ere I slept, sometimes amid roaring tempests, with the rude gale tossing the ship from wave to wave like an egg-shell, my last thought was of her in her peaceful cottage on Ilfracombe Cliff, and I prayed Heaven to make me good enow to deserve her love."

Here the captain heaved a patient sigh which pierced my soul.

"Well, well, lad ! 'T will na do to dwell too long on that time, though it is something to have known three years of happiness in this life."

I waited in silence, till Chester took up the sad burden of his story once more.

"One bright, calm morning in May, our good ship came into harbor. There stood the craggy cliffs, and the little white town straggling up the steep street, just as I had left it. I looked to see

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her standing on the shore, and when I missed her from the crowd, which had gathered to welcome us, my spirit sank within me, for I feared she was dead; but 't was worse, lad, worse! When I asked for her the folk, not knowing they broke my heart, told me lightly that she was wed to a carpenter.

“*Wed!* I staggered as I walked away, and those that stood around nudged each other, thinking that I was overcome with drink; but I was drunk with grief, and mad with anger and the thought of vengeance.

“I strode up the steep village street. Of a sudden mine eyes lighted on a new cottage, builded since last I was at home. (Three years make mighty changes in places as in people.) Whom should I see, sitting in the door-way, but her that had betrayed me!

“I have ever believed — I think I could na go living but for the thought — that if my wrath had but had time to cool, I had never done the thing I did. I stood there before her, she and I alone together as we shall stand at the Judgment Throne, and I — I cursed her! I called down the vengeance of God on her, and on him she had wed, and on the children she should bear.”

“And she?” I broke in, “said she anything in her own defence?”

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“Nay, no more than the flower defends itself against the storm that beats it to earth. She went white of a sudden, and sank to the floor. Thus I left her, and, going down the hill, I found another ship that set sail next day for the coast of Denmark, and I sailed in her, and for nigh fifteen year I never saw Ilfracombe again.”

Silence once more and the lapping of the waves. I longed to hear further this strange, sad story which had come near to drive my own poor little tragedy out of my mind, yet durst I not urge him to speak. I was glad when, a moment after, he went on of his own accord.

“My heart was softened by those years of absence. Time, which dulls all things, had taken the edge from my anger and my grief, and I was shamed when I bethought me how I had cursed a solitary and defenceless woman. I came back to Ilfracombe on purpose to seek her out, and to beg her to let by-gones be by-gones and be friends once more.

“Again I inquired for her, and again my heart was stabbed. She had died, so the neighbors said, fifteen years syne, within three months of the day the ‘Flying Hart’ came into port.

“She had been with child then (God forgive me

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for my cruel words), — a daughter, that was born after, whilst the mother lay a-dying.

“The child, they said, had ever been strange; wrong like i’ the head, and had never spoken a word.”

A light began to break on my mind, but the matter was so strange and full of bewilderment that I sat as one dazed and spake no word for some minutes. At length I cried, “Can it be that ’twas the old man in the cabin below; and the child was the dumb maid, his daughter?”

“Ay, Humphrey,” quoth the Captain, “I see by thy look that thou hast guessed the rest. The carpenter was Giles Lucas, a dull, good man that ne’er suspicioned aught, — neither our betrothal nor her falseness nor my cruelty. ’Twas not his fault that he had won a fickle fancy and a soft heart away from their vows, by kind words and the promise of a good home.

“He is well enow, well enow, but when I saw him and his dumb daughter amongst the passengers on my ship, I was filled with foreboding, though I be not a coward by nature. I feared God had taken me at my word, and that curser and accursed would perish together, in the doom I had impiously called down.”

“Yet it fell not out so.”

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"Dost thou remember the twenty-second of March, the day we met the Spanish man-of-war?"

"Sooth, I am not like to forget it, since that day's fight came near sending us all to the bottom of the sea!"

"Ay, well, on that day the maid fell in a trance, and her finger pointed off to the southàrd (the direction whence that foul Spaniard sneaked upon us), and her eyes were set in terror, and for hours she lay so, all through the fight. I would rather face the foul fiend than look upon her so again. Bohun, the ship's doctor, thought it but a touch o' the falling sickness; but I knew better. I knew 't was a warning of that which befell."

"But naught of harm came to thee after all, nor yet to her," said I, striving to comfort him. "Did we not beat off those dogs of Spaniards and slay their admiral? Troth! I mind me still of the look of Giles Lucas as he stood by his great gun on the half-deck, with his white beard floating in the wind and his shot scattering ruin and confusion among the enemy, till one cried out that there was no use contending with old Death himself. Sure the maid must be a white witch, for it is good and not ill she brought us."

"Nay, the cloud has lifted for a time, but, Humphrey, I feel it in my soul that some day

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the curse will fall ; and I feel too, and that without sorrow, that my fate is somehow bound up with the fate of that maid, and that the same blow that strikes her will fell me too. God is just, and I am guilty ! ”

The ship's bell sounded the end of the captain's watch. The mate came on deck, and I went below. We said no more then, or for long after, touching these things.



CHAPTER II.

AN OLD FRIEND IN A NEW LAND.

I LANDED at Point Comfort, but I tarried thereabouts only a little over three months, for I saw no likelihood of earning my living, the inhabitants being most abominable healthy. Being told that at James City fevers and such like disorders did much prevail, owing to the dampness of the marshes and the muddiness of the drinking water, I determined to betake myself thither, for physicians are like carrion crows and must follow the scent of death.

I had been but three days here in James City when, walking one morning in the narrow unpaved passage between the wooden houses which here does duty for a street, I beheld, twirling his mustachios on the next corner, the figure of a gallant, clad in rich yet shabby dress. The lace of the ruffles about his wrists had more open work than the maker thereof ever intended. The points

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which held his doublet and hose together had lost their tags, and his jerkin showed stains of weather and of wine. The face above it was likewise somewhat the worse for both; but the eyes twinkled so merrily that one scarce noted the redness of the nose, and the gayety of the lips redeemed the heaviness of the chin. At least I thought so, but a man's judgment is ne'er too keen when he encountereth an old friend in a strange land.

At any rate 't is certain that a man may look the gentleman, be he never so shabby, provided his beard and his boots be well kept. Our eyes met on the instant.

"Why, slay me," I cried, "an it be not Jack-in-the-Box!"

The cavalier laid his hat with its bedraggled plumes upon his heart, as he bowed low before me with mock ceremony.

"And can this be that Humphrey Huntoon whom I remember lean and learned there in London aforetime, while the rest of us were killing the fatted calf, and making merry with our friends?"

"Nay, Jack, thou art at fault in thy quotation, for if I mistake not, 't was the father of the prodigal that killed the fatted calf to make a rejoicing over his son's reform, but thou and thy fellow

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roysterers were still squandering your portions in riotous living."

"Ah, rogue! hast thou caught me tripping in my Scripture? Well, to tell the truth, I think my Bible must have been ymbeasiled, for I found it not in my sea-trunk, so I have not been able to refresh my memory. But tell me, Master Tortoise, how and wherefore art thou come hither?"

"Faith! 't is the very query I was fain to put to thee, for the last word I had from thee was dated 'Ye Sponging House, Fleet Street.'"

"Yea, man, and 't was a fair investment of thy ten pounds that lifted me out of that vile debtor's prison, which hath detained me so long and so oft that the ribald mirth of jesters like thee hath christened me 'Jack-in-the-Box.' I shall ne'er forget that kindness of thine; not that I would offer to repay thee in filthy lucre, — I ne'er insulted friend after that fashion, — but my influence, that valuable which costs little and comes to much, is at your service."

"Thine influence! Wilt thou never have done with that ancient jesting habit of thine?"

"Trust me, I speak but the sober truth."

"Then 't is the first time Jack-in-the-Box e'er spake anything sober."

"But I tell thee 't is not Jack-in-the-Box who

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speaks, but Master John Pory, secretary to his Excellency Sir George Yerely, Governor of Virginia. Ay! drop thy jaw like a gaby and stare thine eyes out of their sockets.

Thus things proceed and vary not a jot
Whether you know them or you know them not."

"Well, then, Master John Pory, secretary to his Excellency the Governor of Virginia, if thou indeed hast a right to that high-sounding title and art not masquerading to mock at my credulity, why then, I say, thou art well met, for I am travelling with my cap in hand to catch whatsoever larks may be falling."

"And I," quoth he, "am the man to drop them ready cooked into thy hat. Now here is a chance opening for thee at once. The governor hath bade me make ready shortly to pay a visit to his Majesty, the Laughing King of Accomac, whose dominions lie on the eastern shore of the Bay of Chesupioc to the northward of Dale's Gift. I am to take with me a pinnace, and ten men fully armed, for the king hath sometimes a trick of giving white-face embassies an over-warm welcome, and is fond of preserving locks of their hair with the skin attached, as a keepsake."

"And are these the larks thou didst promise?"

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that I shall be one of the ten to be roasted over the infernal bonfires of these savages? I thank thee, good John, but I have a taste for gentler sports."

"Nay, t'is not death, but a taste of life I am offering thee. I have often told thee, with the honesty which befitted a friend, that thou art too much of a bookworm. Thou hast need to learn of our brave Captain Smith, who made his boast that he scorned to sit down in a library to write of other men's exploits, but that he did rather take his pen and inkhorn with him into the trenches and behind the barricades, where what his sword did his pen writ.

"So shall it be with thee. We will send back to England 'A True Relation of the Habits of the Naturals in Virginia,' writ by Humphrey Huntoon; and the description will appear but the more graphic if the volume be bound in thine own hide, neatly tanned and dressed by some copper-colored squaw."

"John Pory," quoth I, "I have ever observed that another man's skin maketh excellent subject for sport, but I have such respect for mine that I must e'en beg of thee to leave it out of thy light and profitless discourse. Quit thy jesting and tell me in all seriousness how thou likest this new land."

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“Well, sooth to say, at my first coming I liked it not at all. The solitary uncouthness of the place, together with finding myself sequestered from the excitements which are rife in the great world, did more than a little vex me; but liking grows with wont, and here, among these crystal rivers and odoriferous woods, I do escape much expense, envy, contempt, vanity, and vexation of mind.

“I can see readily, friend John, of what benefit Virginia hath been to thee; perchance thou wilt also make it clear to my dull wits of what use thou canst be to Virginia.”

“Hark ye! young sceptic! Didst ever hear tell of ye secretary bird?”

“Ay.”

“Well ’tis of its feathers the quill pens are made,—which being translated signifies that my services are much in demand for writing letters home. These documents so alluringly set forth the charms and advantages of this region that the readers thereof count it in very truth ‘Earth’s only Paradise,’ as the poet hath writ of it.

“I send such accounts of the black Muscatel grapes as maketh the mouth of him that readeth to water. My stories of the plentifulness and great size of the wild beasts and the household animals do greatly attract both hunter and farmer; while

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he women folk are taken captive by the picture of the gewgaws to be had for nothing from the savages, and gold so plenty that all may go bravely dressed even o' week-days, and as for Sundays, why, I set forth how our cattle-keeper, which is a woman, doth wear a hat of silken beaver, smartly tricked out with a plume and a band of pearl."

"Thou callest thyself a secretary bird, but to my thinking, thou art more like a decoy duck."

"Nay, but rather the fowler that traps the game."

"Ay, and thou drawest thy net cunningly."

"Perhaps, but my conscience is of such a tenderness that it would not let me write those lines about the cattle-keeper till I had placed mine own Sunday hat, pearl band and all upon her head, whereat she was so pleased that I am fed on cream ever since."

While we were thus in the midst of jesting talk, the sound of the church-bell fell on mine ear.

"How now?" I cried. "Are my wits wool-gathering? Surely 't is not the Sabbath, else have we two in a week, for I did attend service in yonder chapel the first day I came."

"Two Sundays in a week! Faith we are much more like to have but one in two weeks, for we are not a godly set. But I tell thee this is a greater

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day than any Sabbath. Hast thou not heard that the Virginia House of Burgesses meets to-day?"

"Nay, I knew not that it met to-day, but I have heard there in Kiccowtan that his Majesty hath proclaimed that Virginia is to have a hand in governing herself, at least in so far as jumps with the royal will."

"Ay, man, and they say that in England, the night before the commission was issued, a flaming comet appeared in the heavens; and well it might, for such a wonder as a free assembly of the people hath never before been seen. Well, 't is to-day, the thirtieth of July, that the House meets for the first time."

"'T is wondrous dull in me to have forgot it. Dost thou know any members?"

"Close thy mouth and open thine ears, and thou shalt be the wiser. Look at me, and thou shalt behold a mighty man, a man of office, — in brief, the speaker-to-be of the House of Burgesses!"

"Thou!"

"I."

"Ne'er again will I credit the saying that a silk purse cannot be made out of a sow's ear. To think that Jack-in-the-Box should come to be a burgess!"

"Strange, but true, nevertheless. Wouldst like

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to see the opening of the session? An thou wilt I will have thee a pass from the governor to enter in with me."

Scarce waiting for my answer, the good-natured fellow darted into the doorway of a house somewhat larger and grander than its neighbors, where, as I surmised, the governor dwelt. Shortly he came out thence, bearing a green ribbon, which, when we were come to the church where the Assembly was to sit, we showed to the door-keeper, and straightway he let us in. There I betook myself to a seat in the corner while my companion returned to escort the governor.

As I sat thus alone, I marvelled much that so fine a church should be builded here, as 't were in the wilderness. The table of the sacrament was of a strange dark wood, and the pulpit and pews of cedar. The windows, which stood open, were wide and richly cased in wooden frames.

The air in the church was of a rare fragrancy, the choir being trimmed with divers plants, and the sacramental table decked with sweet-briar and roses and the red swamp-lilies.

Ere I had fully settled my wandering wits, the sound of a fife and drum struck my ear, announcing the arrival of the burgesses, and presently the procession moved up the aisle. First came his

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Excellency the Governor, a tall man of soldierly bearing, and clad in robes of office. With him walked the Council accompanied by a guard of halberdiers, and behind came, marching in pairs, two-and-twenty Burgesses, of grave and imposing aspect.

But the thing which did most amaze me was to see my old friend Jack-in-the-Box carrying himself with more dignity and solemnity than any in the procession. One would have said he was a born bishop that had somehow missed his calling.

When the Governor was come to the choir, he took his seat on a green velvet chair set for him with a cushion for his feet. The Burgesses, with their hats still on their heads, seated themselves before him. A reverend clergyman rose to offer prayer. The prayer ended and the roll purged, an election was held and the governor announced that Master John Pory was chosen speaker of the House of Burgesses; whereupon Master Pory rose, and removing his hat, stood there in face of that dignified body.

Yes, there he stood, the rogue whom I had many a time and oft, in the old days, helped to bed in his cups, bearing himself with a swelling and majestic port, as tho' on Fortune's cap he were the very button.

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I swear I was near to bursting with laughter as I listened to him reading in a loud voice the king's commission, and then the great charter brought out of England by Sir George Yerely.

"I would fain," said he, "have you hearken to these laws diligently, that in case you find aught not perfectly squaring with the state of this colony, or any law which doth press or bind too hard, we may, by way of humble petition, seek to have it redressed; especially as this great charter is to bind us and our heirs forever."

As the sound of his voice went on and on in a single tone, and as the drowsy hum of bees outside the window among the honeysuckle swelled in mine ears, I fell asleep, and in my dream I saw myself standing on Magdalen Bridge in Oxford with my hand clasping the hand of Betty Romney, as we hearkened to the bells tolling from the tower of Christ Church.

But lo, when I awoke, it was but the bell of the James City Chapel announcing the ending of this, the first session of the Virginia House of Burgesses.

As Pory and I tarried in the porch of the church, I pointed out a wild and rakish fellow playing with the silver handle of his rapier.

"Who may he be?" I queried.

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"That," answered Pory, "is Captain Henry Spelman. He is like to be had up before the Assembly on complaint of Robert Poole who charges him with malicious speeches concerning the governor."

"He looks a fiery and sparkish gentleman."

"Ay, and one that will light the flame of a mutiny here in the colony if he be not quenched in good time. I do remember him at home as a wild lad; and he hath not mended his ways since he came hither."

As Spelman passed out, he cast on us a black look.

"Pray hath he aught against us?" quoth I.

"Sooth, I know not, and what is more I care not. I dare say he holds me responsible (which I am not) for the charges against him, and belike he deems that thou and I are putting our heads together even now in some deep-laid plot against him."

Pory laughed; but the memory of that scowling look abode in my mind, and the day came when I had reason to recall it.



CHAPTER III.

A SHIP COMES IN.

I WAS down for a week with that wretched James City fever. By day I shivered, and by night I burned with a consuming heat. Pory said it served me right that I who had come hither hoping to batten on the misfortunes of others should myself fall a victim. He, for one, hoped that I should get no relief till I had swallowed all the black and bitter drugs in my vile-tasting and worse-smelling collection.

Thus he talked, like himself, and equally like himself he stayed by my bedside day and night, scarcely taking off his clothes, tending me as if I were a baby, and mixing doses of the bark, a sovran remedy, till he saw me well on the road to recovery.

My convalescence he cheered as he had cured my illness. All the gossip of the settlement he brought to my bedside. I learned how John

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Twine and Tom Pierce were at loggerheads over a piece of land; how Captain Powell's servant, Thomas Garnett, for evil behavior was set in the pillory with his ears cropped from his head; and how Henry Spelman, the one who scowled at us from the church door, was found guilty of speaking ill of the governor, and sentenced to be degraded from his title.

One day (I was quite recovered then) my lively friend came bouncing in, full of excitement.

"A ship lieth in the harbor," cried he, "and she hath brought — what think ye?"

"Sooth, I know not. How should I? And if I did 't were cruel to spoil thy sport by saying so. What is this wondrous cargo?"

"Why, twenty maids, come out with one that is already betrothed to Babcock, the blacksmith!"

"Well, what of it?"

"What of it, man! Why 't would be the making of the colony could we get twenty score in place of one. Ay, I say, 't would be the making of this colony. A ship-load of good wives were the best cargo England could send us."

"And thou wouldst choose the handsomest for thyself by right of thine office, I dare be sworn."

"Nay, not I. I have ever had too poor luck

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at play, to throw dice with Fate for such heavy stakes."

With this he ran out, laughing.

When he was gone I stretched my head forth from the window of my lodging. Yonder in the river a tall ship lay black against the shining water. I could see the sailors in their glazed hats and loose, flapping breeches, casting anchor to the time of their harsh song. Skiffs and canoes were plying busily betwixt the ship and the shore. One curious thing I noted, that whereas only one went out in each canoe, two came back; and then, as mine ear caught the ringing of the church-bells and mine eyes marked the gallants who had gone of late ill-clad and worse-shaven, now tricked out in bands of fine lawn, and ruffles at their wrists, a sudden light brake on me, and I realized that all this was because the twenty maids were come, and straightway these bachelors, who till now had been quite content in their single estate, must set their silly hearts on being married.

"Ho there, Master John! I shouted as I caught sight of Pory's grizzled head and pointed beard under my window. "Read me this riddle: What is that which flies when pursued, and pursues when fled from?"

"A maid."

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“Verily, thou art a shrewd fellow to have guessed it. Come up therefore and tell me all thou knowest, which thou mayst do and yet be gone in five minutes.”

“That my civility may the more brightly shine against the foil of thine uncivil words, I will come, and to heap coals of fire on thy head, I will tell thee of the scene on shipboard. The choosing of husbands and wives went on as merrily as the choosing of partners for a country dance. It was a busy market, I can tell thee.”

“A market — how meanest thou?”

“Why, ’t is thus they manage it, by bargain and sale, and belike ’t is as good an arrangement as any, since when the husband hath paid down his hundred pound of tobacco for a wife, he is bound to make himself believe he hath a bargain, and the wife, seeing he hath set so high an estimate on her worth, in honor must strive to live up to his valuation.”

“And was every one of the twenty maids married thus?”

“Ay, all but one; and she remained without a partner from choice, which thou wouldst have declared impossible. Many offered for her though she wore her veil and coverchief close and would not show her features. But she would look at none

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and went off at the last to lodge with her friend, one that was taken to wife by Miles Cary. I was somewhat struck with curiosity over the conduct of the one unwed maid, and I searched out her name in the ship's register where she is set down as Elizabeth Devon. Now, fare thee well! for my five minutes are over and if I told thee more 'twould be what I know not, and ergo, lies."

After my nimble-witted friend was gone his way I sat for long, looking down into the street and watching the bridal couples as they passed from under Parson Bucke's blessing to their new homes. It seemed a strange and abrupt beginning of married life; yet they appeared no less content than those that take twenty years to make up their minds.

All this billing and cooing and setting up of new households made me feel but the more lonely and doleful. So I went not abroad that day, tho' I was well enow to be out; but sat reading and studying with no other comforter than my pipe. But to say truth, the pipe is no mean consoler, and there is no friend that doth so adapt himself to thine every mood, so partake, as 't were, the very shade and subtlety of thy thought and feeling as tobacco. Pory would fain persuade me that the "Sweet

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Scented " is the better brand, but I was wed from the beginning to "Bright Orinoko."

Well, as I sat thus, the day wore on to evening. The flame in my pipe was expiring with a final flicker, when a knock sounded at my door.

"Come in!" I called, and Miles Cary entered.

"Why, how now, Cary! Art thou come to complain of thy bride of half a dozen hours. Hath she beaten thee over the head with the new broomstick, and thou art shamed of thy black eye, and come to get it healed by stealth after dark, lest thou be the laughing-stock of James City?"

"Nay, 't is nowt like that," answered the burly yeoman as he stood awkwardly twirling his Monmouth cap on the end of his finger. I saw that my jests were less amusing to him than to me. Folk are sometimes like that; so putting off my jibing tone, I asked him seriously if aught were ailing in his household.

"Ay, 't is the friend of my wife." He grinned with sheepish pleasure over the last word.

"Is that the unwed maid, Elizabeth Devon, of whom Master Pory spake?"

"Yea; her arm was hurt on the ship in a storm, and methinks it must have been ill treated, for, in place of mending, it grows ever worse; yet have we had a hard task to persuade her to see the

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leech, and even now am I come without her consent. I fear me she is o'er headstrong; but my Kate will have nowt said to her save wi' cap in hand, and she gives more attention to her friend than to her husband."

"Well, well, that is but natural. Grumble not, Cary; but remember that thy courtship must be done after marriage, and be content to bear awhile with coolness."

I took up my box as I spake, and we went out into the night together. As we walked thro' the town, I marvelled much that all should be so changed of a sudden. 'T was no longer a camp, but a village. For good or evil the first English homes had been planted here in the heart of the wilderness.

We stopped before Cary's cottage and I marked its shining neatness. The stepping-stone in front of the door was polished smooth as marble, and the floor within, for all it was but of logs rudely smoothed with an axe, was clean and neatly set in order.

As I stepped into the kitchen which served for hall and parlor and dining-room all in one, I was greeted by the mistress of the house with a deep bobbing courtesy which brought her short skirt down over her bright stockings and almost hid

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the high heels and pointed toes of her wedding slippers.

"Is thy friend badly hurt?" said I.

"Ay, sir, she suffers much, but she bears it ever with so brave a heart and so cheerful a face that none would guess it to look at her."

"She hath learned, perchance, that suffering may oft be smiled away. Hast thou bandages and swathing-cloths at hand?"

"Nay, not rightly at hand, but a plenty in the sea-chest, which hath not yet been opened. Wilt thou lend a hand — *Miles?*"

I could but smile to watch the coquetry with which the name was spoken, and to see how a soft tone and glance oiled the wheels of life and made the half-sulky husband her willing slave.

Foreseeing that the uncording of the chest would be a matter of time, I stepped to the door of the nearer chamber (the house boasted but two) and finding it ajar, I bowed my head to its low proportions and entered.

The room had been filled with flowers, in honor of the home-coming of the bride. 'Tis wonderful to me how thoughtful and tender to women these rough fellows oft be.

The window-sash, its panes filled with oiled paper, was swung open and the night wind blew

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the perfume of wild-rose and honeysuckle in my face. I can feel it still. A single candle shed a dim light around and threw a yellow ray on a wooden arm-chair drawn close to the table.

As I turned me toward this chair, suddenly my heart stopped beating. If the thing had not been so wildly impossible, I could have sworn it was Elizabeth Romney herself sitting there. The maid, whoever she was, had the same delicate curve of ear and throat, the same droop of the eyelid, the very trick of the hand lying open palm upward on the knee.

I brushed my hand across my eyes and looked again. My God! — Incredible! — It could not be! — yet what a likeness!

Then I told myself that I was going mad from dwelling too long on one thought. I must speak and break the spell. As I opened my lips, a sudden searching conviction fell upon me like a lightning flash that this was indeed she, the one woman in the world to me.

I gasped out: "*Elizabeth!*"

The maiden turned, and for the first time caught sight of me standing thus in the doorway.

She gave one low cry of "*Thou!*"

After that one word we faced each other in blank silence. The folk in books have ever some

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pat speech ready for such a moment; but in real life 'tis not so. How could I speak when my brain was whirling like a mill-wheel, and my voice choked in my throat? I stood still and looked upon her, and the longer I looked, the harder I found it to believe that my eyes were not playing me a trick.

Yet 't was but the truth they told me. There she sat,—she that had been brought up to be tended and waited upon, and compassed about with luxuries, now sick and suffering, with only a wooden arm-chair to rest upon, and a cottage roof to shelter her. How, in God's name, had it come to pass?

Her face was deadly pale, for all she had been three months on the sea; and now, as she gazed at me, she grew ever whiter, and swayed as tho' she would fall in a swoon. But all the while she kept her eyes fixed steadfastly on mine. They were eyes never to be forgotten by one who had seen them once. I have heard folks praise the brilliancy of her glance and the curling length of her eyelashes; but, to her lover, there lay a subtler charm in the tender trouble of her eyebrows, bending slightly downward toward the inner corner. I noted it now as distinctly as the drowning man counts the bubbles in the water.

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I was the first to find my voice, and I hated myself that it sounded hard and stern, when I was mad to fling myself at her feet and entreat her to trust herself to me. But that abominable diffidence of mine, which is so akin to pride that one is oft mistook for t'other, played me false, and made me seem in her eyes, I doubt not, like a pragmatistical schoolmaster chiding a recreant child.

“Elizabeth Romney! — am I dreaming, or is it indeed thou — come on the ship with the maids?”

An angry flush swept over the whiteness of her cheek and rose to meet the hair that curled in childish rings round her little ears.

“Thou art thinking, perhaps, that I too, like these others, am come three thousand miles in search of a husband?”

I knew not what to say, and so I said nowt.

“Well, believe 't if thou wilt!” she flung out, her eyes one blaze of wrath; “but believe not that thou art such a husband as I would seek, — not though thou wert the only man on this side of the ocean, and though all the tobacco in Virginia were the price in thine hand.”

“I am not like to believe that, Mistress Betty,” I answered bitterly. “Yet would I rather believe anything, than that this journey is a mad prank of

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thine without rhyme or reason. Wild and venturesome thou hast ever been ; but never unmindful of thy sex or thy station."

"Which means that now I have shown myself unmindful of both. I thank thee, Humphrey Huntoon ; but till I seek thy counsel, do thou keep thy censure !"

I know not what we might have spoken further, for anger was hot in both our hearts ; but at that instant Dame Cary and her goodman came in, bearing a roll of linen and a whale-oil lamp ; which, vile smelling as it was, gave a brighter light than the candle.

As it shone on the maiden's face, the look of illness and suffering was more plain to be seen ; and I cursed myself for a fool that I had forgotten all this time the arm I had been called to tend. I took the linen from Dame Cary's hand and tore it into strips ; I laid out on the table ointments and balms, and then I turned me once more to the patient.

"Will you be good enough to let me see the hurt ?" I asked in a constrained voice.

Without a word, she threw back her short cape and showed me the right arm wound round and round with clumsy swathings, which I straightway set to work to unwind. It was well that my calling

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had trained the fingers to work coolly, no matter how hotly the heart might be beating.

I went near to breaking out into oaths when I laid bare the arm, and saw how great a bungler had had charge of the hurt there on the ship. Had the arm continued as it was but a little longer, it had been past the aid of the most skilful chirurgery. As it was, that which had been so ill done must be undone ere it could be set right.

The doing of this cruel kindness went near to break my heart; yet she who suffered bore it without a groan. The free hand grasped the arm of the chair more closely, and the face was set in the look of one who would die ere look or sound of weakness be wrung from her. Only the sharper drawing down of the eyebrow marked the strain and stress of suffering.

At length, after a time which seemed to me longer than many a month I have known since, the poor arm was rebound in a pair of splints, hastily made from barrel staves. As I swathed it in band over band of linen, I turned to Dame Cary — I dared not trust my voice to address that other.

“Your friend,” quoth I, “hath an excellent courage.”

“That hath she!” broke in Miles Cary, who had the true English love of bravery, and who, as

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he stood by, holding the lamp while I worked, had been greatly stirred by the sight of the maid's endurance. "Had we but a company of soldiers like her, we had no need of a stockade round about James City. We would harry the naturals out of the land before Advent."

"Ay," put in his wife, "but ye should have seen her on the sea! In that great storm when her arm was broke, she was the only one of us that screamed not nor wailed, nor wished herself on land; but went about cheering and encouraging all, so that the captain himsel' took note on her, and named her, 'Ye Mistress o' ye Maides.'"

Methought I saw a glance of warning pass from the girl in the chair to the woman in waiting, for she straightway brake off her discourse, and spake quite sharply to her husband, bidding him go before with the light, that we might follow without breaking our necks over the kitchen settle.

So they went out and I walked behind them stupidly as far as the door. There I found my wits, and turning back, I stepped close to the arm-chair.

"The doctor," quoth I, in a low voice, "craves pardon for the hurt he could not help."

"The *doctor*," she replied, also speaking very

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soft, "is pardoned in advance, for he hath but done his duty. For the friend, 't is another matter. I cannot soon forget that he hath failed me."

"Yet he too hath but thy good at heart, and that thou wilt some day confess; and so must I leave thee. Good-night, madam!"

I spoke the last words in a louder tone and bowing low I passed out of the chamber.

In the kitchen I tarried for a little talk and spent the time in taking note of this Dame Cary, who was so strangely become the hostess of Mistress Romney. I studied her and I was satisfied. "This," said I to myself, "is no prating busy-body. That mouth shuts close, and, methinks, can keep a secret, even from her husband. The eyes are small, and not too knowing; but the little they speak is truth. Mistress Romney may count on her faith and loyalty."

"Fare ye well, good people!" I said, at length. "Nay, never mind the lantern. I can see my way home by the light o' the moon, e'en tho' it be not my honey-moon. See to it, Dame Cary, that thy friend stirs not nor quits her room till I see her again!"

Despite my protest, Cary held the lamp high above his head as I departed. It shone out cheerily into the night, but it could not throw

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a light upon the black bewilderment of my mind.

“How came it to pass? How *did* it come to pass?” So I kept asking myself, and the only answer was the rustle of the dark pine boughs and the lapping of the river on the beach.



CHAPTER IV.

FORGIVE ME !

THREE within the week after that night, I saw Elizabeth Romney. The first time she slept, and I disturbed her not ; the second time I but changed the bandages on the arm, and she, lying back on her pillow, feigned a weakness that forbade over-much speech. Her conversation was after the Scripture injunction, — but “yea, yea, and nay, nay.”

“Had she fever ? ”

“Nay.”

“Had she slept ? ”

“Yea.”

“Was the arm more painful ? ”

“Nay, rather less.”

Kate Cary, who stood by, helping me to bind up the arm, and who, if I flatter not myself too far, had taken somewhat of a liking to me from the beginning, would fain now have drawn the lady on

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to longer and more gracious speech, but she would not; only, when I took my leave she lifted those great eyes of hers and said: "I thank thee!"

Mayhap the words were but an idle form of courtesy, yet none the less they shed an inward gladness which warmed me like sunshine.

"I thank thee," sang the birds.

"I thank thee," nodded the tassels of the corn.

"I thank thee," chirped the grasshopper from beneath the broad-spreading tobacco-leaf.

Everywhere as I passed that day Nature seemed pitched to suit the tune of my mind, and echoed the joy in my heart.

The third time I saw her, things fell out in this wise. When I entered the door of the Carys' cottage, the kitchen was empty, but not lonely. The kettle sang on the fire and a cat purred on the hearth. Save for these cheery sounds utter silence reigned.

I pushed on to the entrance of the sick-room. Through the open door I saw the invalid sitting, with her head leaned against the casement, gazing out toward the sea. 'T was nigh sunset, and her head stood out like a shadow picture against the brightness of the evening sky.

Her attitude was full of pensive charm, but it smote upon my heart; 't was so full also of list-

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lessness, and despondency, and longing for home. Slowly, as I looked, the head drooped lower and lower, till it fell upon the arm outstretched along the window-sill, and the shoulders rose and fell, shaken by a tempest of sobs.

I was fain to beat a retreat that I might come in again after a noisier fashion, but the board creaked beneath my feet and her swift ear caught the sound.

She raised her head in a quick, wilful way which was her wont, and brushing away the tell-tale drops which still stood on her cheek, she said: "I — I was not weeping!"

"Who could have thought it?" I answered, smiling at her childish falsehood, if falsehood it could be called, that was as transparent as the mist of morning.

"Poor child!" said my heart, "so young, so far from friends and fatherland, why shouldst thou not weep?" But that accursed diffidence which ever haunts me held me tongue-tied. I took her hand and strove to hold it; but she pulled it away, looked at me straight a moment and then, laying down her head, fell a-sobbing once more like a homesick child. I sat me down on the window-seat by her side, and looked out on the wide expanse of the yellow river. "See," I said, after a

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moment, "there is goodman Cary on the wharf loading the last casks of tobacco on 'The Tyger.' She sails to-morrow for home. Wouldst thou not be glad to be aboard?"

"Thou art either exceeding cruel or passing dull."

"Nay, surely not cruel, and I trust not duller than the rest of my sex. But I see thee sick for home and I long to help thee. The captain's wife sails with him on 'The Tyger,' and if thou art eager to go too, 't is not too late. Thine arm is so far mended that thou mayst safely travel."

"Doctor Huntoon, thou hast ever, despite all thy care and kindness, treated me like some naughty child that hath run away from its home without counting the cost. 'T is true I have left my father's house secretly, run away, if thou wilt; yet could I do no otherwise."

I wished eagerly that she would speak further of her reasons, but remembering how she turned on me that first night, I durst not question her, but sat there silent, thrilled with the impotent desire to help.

"Ah, well," she went on presently, "bad as things are, they might be worse. I am of full age, and, thanks to my mother's legacy of jewels, I am not dependent. I have, moreover, a plan in my

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head concerning my future, of which I should have spoken with thee ere now; but thy manner when first we met was so deadly cold I came near to catching a chill" (here she gave a little shiver). "I vowed then that, come what might, I would ne'er look to thee for counsel, nor ask thee aught of favor."

"'T is strange," quoth I, "for I have vowed the same of thee. Yet may some priest be at hand when I die, to shrive my soul of the broken oath, for I am come this very night to ask a boon of thee. But first let me see the arm. Ah! that is doing passing well! Another fortnight and thou mayst have the bandages off and wear only a sling."

"The boon! The boon!" she cried, more gayly than I had heard her utter speech since the old days down in Devonshire. "Do not waste time in talking of my arm; but proffer thy request! If 't is anything in reason, and humbly asked, it is possible I may not say it nay."

"Be it so, then!" I answered, catching somewhat of her lightness of heart, for she had ever that way with her, and could make folk round her smile or sigh, even as the sun makes lake and mountain bright or dull according as he sheds or veils his light.

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"Hear, O Queen, mine humble prayer, and, that thou mayst the better comprehend my petition, listen to my story ! Once upon a time — "

"Good," said she, "it beginneth like my nurse's tales, and must end : 'they married and lived happy ever after.'"

When she had said the words, a deep blush spread over her face from brow to chin, and she frowned as if with vexation at her own speech.

"Nay," I answered gravely. "It hath, I fear me, no such happy ending."

"Well, well !" quoth she, tapping the floor impatiently with her scarlet slipper, "tell on, and I will interrupt thee no more."

"As I was saying, then, there was once on a time a brave sailor, and his queen sent him as a token a signet ring set in fine gold."

"I know," cried Mistress Betty, lifting her head with a wonderful stateliness as tho' she shared the pride that was in mine own heart, "that brave sailor was thine uncle, Sir Humphrey, and the ring is the one on thine hand."

"So much," said I, laughing, "for thy promise not to interrupt ; but thou hast guessed it. 'Tis the same ring, worn first by my uncle and then by my mother, and by her given to me with the injunction that I wear it for life or till I

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should place it on the finger of my betrothed wife."

I saw the maiden tremble and grow white, and I understood that she feared I was about to bring up that old sore subject; so I hurried on.

"It looks now as tho' I should wear it to my grave as she did, if I have the good luck to die a natural death; but I cannot bear the thought that this sacred ring may fall into the clutches of some vile savage; and this brings me to the substance of my petition."

"Say on!" said Mistress Betty, but the life was gone from her tone, and I misdoubted but that I had already wearied her with over-much talking of myself.

"Well, then, to make a long story short, I am planning to go to-morrow with Master Pory, the Governor's secretary, to the eastern shore beyond the Bay, on a visit to the Laughing King of Accomac. Since no man can foresee what may come to pass there, I would fain be on the safe side, and therefore I make bold to pray thee to keep my ring, to wear it till I come again, and if I come not, then to wear it still in memory of one who despite all his blundering, was ever true friend of thine."

Mistress Betty took the ring, and slipped it on

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her slender finger, for which 't was a world too wide. She twirled it round and round, and for a long while she spake no word. Then, lifting up her eyes with the tears still swimming in them, she smiled, and 't was as when a shower breaks and there behind it we catch a glimpse of shining sky.

“‘E. R.,’” she murmured to herself, and holding her hand out before her with the ring on it. “They are unlucky initials. They stand for *Elizabeth Regina*, a poor queen who died, after all her grandeur, solitary and deserted; and for Elizabeth Romney, a poor maid, whose only friend goes off among the naturals to be rid of her.”

If ever man was a dolt and a dullard, I was that wight, that I spake not out boldly then and there, bidding her say why she cozened me thus with sweet speeches,—she that had played with my heart and flung it away like a cast-off trinket. But the passing moment was sweet, and I could ill brook the thought of marring it with harsh words.

“Thy friend,” quoth I, “will I ever be, so long as I live; and wherever I am thou hast but to call on me for whatsoever help it lies in my poor power to give, and it is thine. That thou knowest right well.”

Still, by a sidelong glance I saw her downcast look, and I strove to cheer her.

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"For this visit to the Indians," I said, "'t is a small affair, and we shall bring back strings of peak and roanoke and curious embroideries, and for thee I will bring a black bear-skin for the back of thy chair."

She smiled, but absently, as one who leaves her lips to perform the duties of courtesy while her mind is gone off on a holiday. Yet, manlike, I went on, dwelling on all the strange experiences we should meet and all the travellers' tales we should bring home to make her merry withal. She did but half hearken, and when I was done, —

"At what hour do ye set forth?" said she.

"At the firing of the sunrise gun. Pory hath his pinnace ready fitted at the wharf, and if the wind fail us not, we should reach Kiccowtan by noon; thence we cross the Bay and come to Accomac at such time as pleaseth the old man who sits at the cave of the winds."

"And your coming back?"

"Why, 't is set for a week hence, unless the king and his relatives should take so great a liking to us that they will not be persuaded to part from us till Governor Yerely do send a special messenger to fetch us."

"'T is well," she answered, speaking somewhat short, as having heard enough.

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Even I, slow tortoise tho' I be, could take that hint.

"Then fare thee well," said I, rising; "and thou wilt wear the ring till I return?"

"What a stupid animal is a man!" quoth this chameleon, changing swift as lightning from weary to sprightly, and showing a row of white teeth in the most charming smile in the world.

"Good Master Blind-as-a-Bat, how am I to wear thy ring? Do I not have a hard enough task as it is to keep up my part, and wouldst thou have me mix dough with a queen's ring on my finger?"

"I never thought of that."

"Well, 't is lucky for us both that I am gifted with a woman's wit. I will wear thy ring, yet not thus."

As she spake she loosened the ruff about her neck, and with some difficulty her left hand did undo the clasp of a slender chain of gold made in the form of a serpent which upheld a miniature of a brilliant and beautiful dame with Mistress Betty's own soft dark eyes and waving hair.

"Yea," quoth she, "I will wear it beside my mother's picture on this chain;" and she slipped it on in a trice. "But," she said, looking up at me with a question in her glance, "how am I to

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fasten it again with my right arm swathed and bound tight to my breast."

"I am but a clumsy tiring-woman," I said, "but if thou wilt tell me how the clasp closeth, methinks I can fasten it."

"See, then; take this end, the serpent's head, in thy right hand thus; and the tail in thy left hand thus; and fit the tail into the mouth, thus. Now, do thou try!"

She bent her head and I stood over her, stooping that I might the more closely observe the opening in the serpent's mouth, but my hand trembled so that, for my life, I could not bring the head and tail together, and I thought at first I must e'en give up the task; till at length, more through luck than skill, the fastening snapped together.

"I am sorry to have given you the trouble," says my lady, rising very grand to her feet like some great court dame now, that had been a child but five minutes before. "I thank you and I wish you good-night and good-bye."

With that she swept me a stately courtesy strangely at odds with the tiny bare room; but I matched it with a bow as deep as the Duke of Buckingham's, my hand on my heart and my sword standing out behind; and so we parted.

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How had I offended her? This was the question I asked myself over and over again that night and could give no answer. Did she feel in her heart the thoughts that thrilled in mine as I bent over her there, and was she angry that I but *longed* to kiss her? Surely that were to judge more harshly than the Recording Angel himself, who writeth not down to the charge of us poor sinners those perverse inclinations which we do steadfastly resist, and carry not out into action.

The next morning while the stars still shone in the summer sky I was out of bed, and making ready for my journey. My apparel was not fine; but 't was fit and proper to its uses. My leggings were of stout leather buttoned over a pair of Irish stockings. The suit of rough frieze buttoned to my chin, and on my head I wore a Monmouth cap. The weather was colder than prevailed here ordinarily at the season, and I was dressed to meet storm as well as sunshine. About my waist I wore a belt, in which, beside my bandelier filled with powder, I carried a light dagger, and over my shoulder I slung my long piece, a fine one, measuring nigh five foot and a half. My box of physic and instruments of chirurgery I strapped together with my pipe and tobacco and a leather bottle of

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aquavitæ, and rolled all round with my sea-rug. Thus I set forth.

All James City was still asleep, save the watchman who was just putting out his lanthorn after the last cry of "four o' the clock, and all 's well!" Morning was already breaking, and the red that flushes the sky before the rising of the sun set me to thinking of friendship and love. They were queer thoughts to haunt the head of a man going forth on an expedition among savages; but I could not get rid of them, and, as I drew near Miles Cary's cottage, my sentimental mood got quite the better of me, and I stood with uncovered head calling down peace upon that house and them that dwelt therein.

Of a sudden I was 'ware in the silence of a moving of the window sash in the eastern room. A low voice called softly, "Doctor Huntoon!" and at the same moment, Mistress Betty Romney appeared at the casement. She was clad in a soft light gown, and her hair fell in heavy waves over her shoulders. Very young she looked and very sorrowful. I bethought me of that scene at the brook in Devon a dozen years before.

"Mistress Betty! awake so early?"

"Yea, doctor, I but wished to speak with thee ere thou embarked on the pinnace, that I might be

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sure I heard thee aright last night. I think thou saidst I might take off the bandage from mine arm to-morrow or the day after."

Little cheat! she thought nowt o' the sort; but I was so simple no suspicion of her crossed my mind.

"Take off the bandage!" I cried, "at thy peril! By my faith, if thou and Dame Cary have no more wisdom than that betwixt ye, I 'll e'en beg off from Pory and his expedition, and bide at home to look after so silly a patient."

"Nay, Humphrey," quoth my lady, the friendly sunshine playing over lips and eyes, "'t was not quite for this I stopped thee; but I had not the courage to call out, 'Forgive me!' loud enow to wake the town. Yet I could not let thee part from me in anger."

How little, keen as she was, could she read my heart.

"Take my hand," quoth she, "as thou wert wont when we had quarrelled as children, and say, 'Betty, for all thy naughtiness I do forgive thee.'"

Bending low over her hand, I raised it to my lips, murmuring:—

"Betty, for all thy naughtiness, I not only forgive thee freely, but —"

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“Nay, qualify not thy forgiveness with any ‘buts.’
Besides if thou stay for further speech thou mayst
lose thy trip. Yet, ere thou go, I will call down
on thee the benediction of thy ring : —

‘God be near thee
On land and sea !’

Hearken, Humphrey, — ’t is the sunrise gun —
Begone !”



CHAPTER V.

ACROSS THE BAY. — ABOARD THE "RED FOX."

"COME on, thou long-legged son of Satan! How much longer wouldst thou keep us waiting while thou liest snoring away the morning hours? 'The wind sits in the shoulder of our sail, and you are stayed for,' as the old man saith to his son in the play at the Globe Theatre. Hamor, push off! Allington, see to it that she dig not her nose into the wharf as we pass, to scrape off the new red paint!"

"So!" said I, "'tis but a painted beauty your shallop can boast, Master Pory! Then will I none of her. Give me a beauty that shows as well by sunlight as by candlelight; with no colors but the rose of youth and morning."

"How now, lads!" cries Pory, with a comical twist of his moustachios. "Have we a madman aboard the 'Red Fox'? He cannot be drunk at this early hour; yet he raves of beauty like one

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that hath been all day at a tavern. 'T is clear he hath need of a strait-jacket, being light i' the head."

"Nay, masters, my lightness is not of the head, but of the heart. 'T is true, though, that this Virginia air doth go to the brain like wine."

"Then lie down there in the stern, and drink it in, while the 'Red Fox' runs before the wind, as she will, gayly as a bride trips the measures of a contra-dance."

Waiting no further orders or urging from Pory, I stretched myself out on the deck with my rug beneath my head, and my cap drawn over my eyes. As all hands were at work, I was at leisure to dream my day-dreams without interruption.

There was but one vision ever before me. A picture of youth, and hope, and morning; an open casement, and a pale, fair face looking out with drooping eyelids and a delicate line of troubled eyebrows, from under falling masses of shadowy hair. But the face looked on me with kindness, and I held a soft white hand in mine.

"Perhaps," I thought to myself, "there is yet room for hope. She feels now only pity that she hath, in her carelessness, hurt the heart of a friend, but pity is cousin-german to love, and who knows but she may learn to love me for the love I bear

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her? I will not hurry her. I will give her time, and compass her about with delicate observances till she find herself turning to me as the shy pansy, at last, turns its face to the sun. Then she shall find a heart beating warm and true, with no longing save to make her life happy, and guard her against all comers."

All comers. The words started a new train of thought which ere long bit like an adder. What if some of these settlers and adventurers coming over to Virginia, since they are of all ranks and degrees, should be friends of the Romneys, and seeing her and me together here, should send back to England such reports as made men believe I had enticed her hither! Would any, knowing what friends we had been from childhood, believe that we came each in ignorance of the other's coming?"

The thought pierced like hot iron into mine honor, yet 't was more of her than of myself that I thought. Dare I, then, take such risks for her?

To ask the question was to answer it. Nay, not though her hand were the prize, would I run such hazard. We must part! If she left James City, I must stay. If she stayed, I must go. So much I then and there did vow, but the force of my will could go no further, and I resolved to let my future

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course drift before the wind of Fate. Meanwhile I determined to shake off the load of care which sat so heavy on my heart, and throw myself into the excitements of the passing moment.

I rose, and made my way to the bow of the shallop, where sat Pory, making laughable efforts to learn words and phrases of the Indian tongue from Tom Salvage, a youth who had lived for some months among the naturals, and was come on this expedition as interpreter betwixt us and them. Pory, sitting as he was, kicking his heels against a barrel, and leaning his elbows on his knees, looked a strange head for an embassy of State. It was ever a singular thing about this man, that one who saw him grave would say he never jested, and one who met him in jesting mood would swear he could never be serious.

Three of the men were struggling to cook a mess of oatmeal porridge over a stove that appeared to have the rickets, so unstable was it on its legs. As I strove to come to their aid and prop up the stove with a block of wood, my foot struck against a long, low chest, stumbling over which, I was like to break my neck.

"In the king's name I command you meddle not with that box!" sang out Pory.

"And pray what is sacred in that unwieldy thing,

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set along the deck as a stumbling-block to the unwary? Doth it hold State treasure?"

"Yea, verily, it is full of precious articles. Let me see, I believe I have the list here," and drawing an inventory from his breast, Pory began to read aloud in the sing-song tone of a seller at an outcry:—

"Two pieces of copper,
Five strings of blue beads,
Five wooden combs,
Ten fish-hooks,
One pair of knives,
Six scarlet blankets, and
Twenty Bibles.'

"All these to be solemnly and in due form presented with the compliments of His Majesty, King James the First of England to his Royal Brother, the Laughing King of Accomac."

"And what seek you in exchange for this box of toys and trinkets thus strangely mixed up with volumes of Holy Writ?"

"Why, that you shall know when we sit in conclave round the Indian fires on the eastern shore, and not before. To tell it now were a flat betrayal of State secrets."

"Tell me, then, at least, of what service these Bibles can be to these ignorant savages, who can

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neither read, nor so much as comprehend the words if one reads to them?"

"Catechise me no further, I pray," answered Pory, shrugging his shoulders. "The company at home hath given strict orders that every expedition to the naturals do carry Bibles for their conversion. These good Christians, I suppose, think it no more than fair that if we take away the inheritance of the savages on earth, we should in return share with them our interest in the promised land.

"As for the poor devils themselves, they look upon the Scriptures as a book of charms where-with the white men propitiate their god, and they hope to steal the secret and win him over to the red men's side. So, 't is diamond cut diamond."

The men laughed loud and long at this sally, but I felt ashamed in my heart thus to be trafficking in holy things and tricking these poor ignorant beings.

The sun had risen high in the heavens. We had long passed the bend in the river which hid James City from our eyes. Another turn brought a broad stretch of blue water in sight; later, when the sun stood full on the mark of noon, we saw the long tongue of sand which Point Comfort thrusts out into the Bay, and soon the "Red Fox" swept into the quiet harbor of Kiccowtan.

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"Hulloa!" cried I, in some surprise, "Do we put in here?"

"Ay," said Hamor, as he prepared the skiff to go ashore. "Here we take on Master Rolfe. See you not that man standing on the shore, holding his boy by the hand? That is Rolfe, and since ever his Indian wife, Pocahontas, died, he will scarce let the child out of his sight."

"Pocahontas!—why, so was she named that all London went crazy after in London, where she was known as the Lady Rebecca."

"Ay, 't was she, and she died at Gravesend, poor lady—God rest her soul! As for her husband, he hath the longest head and the coolest judgment in the colony. Glad am I that he cometh with us on this trip which (between you and me) is a ticklish business."

While he spoke, Hamor was busy lowering the boat, and now, leaping into it, sent it flying across the water with great sweeps of his stout oars. I looked from his boat to the shore and studied the tall, silent man who stood there holding tight to the hand of a little lad with dark eyes and long straight hair. As the boat's keel grated on the sand, he took the boy in his arms and strained him to his heart. Then he stepped into the boat, and without a backward glance put off for the shallop.

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"Ha!" exclaimed Pory at mine elbow, "here is a man who when he hath put his hand to an enterprise, looketh not back, tho' what he loveth best in life be behind him. A rare man, and one that will stand us in good stead, if trouble threaten."

With that, he put out the boathooks and held the skiff while Rolfe came aboard; then once more the boat was hung on its davits and the "Red Fox" was skimming across the open water of Chesapeake Bay. The north wind blew us over to starboard till our rail was under water, and our bow cut the waves like a knife. Let a man be ever so deep in love or grief, his spirits must rise when he looks on the white caps of the green billows, when he feels the salt spray on his face, and the dancing deck beneath his feet keeps time with the dancing waves.

At sunset, the eastern shore, where lieth the kingdom of Accomac, was in full view. First we saw a blue streak, then a low, sharply cut strip of land jagged with trees, and here and there a giant pine towering like some church spire among its fellows.

As darkness fell, high fires of brushwood flamed along the shore, and told us that we were expected.

"Now, my men," said Pory, summoning all hands on deck, "I have a word to say to you before

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we go ashore. At James City yonder, every man is his own master, and each may hold his head as high as John Pory. On the shallop 'Red Fox' likewise, we are all comrades, and you will bear me witness that I have given myself no airs, but made common mess with the rest of you, as a good sailor should. So far, so good! But from the moment we set foot on the shores of Accomac, things are changed. I become as great a chief as any Werrowance of them all. I command; you obey. When I scowl, you tremble; and what I say, you swear to."

"Ay ay!" shouted the men with one accord.

"As for thee, Huntoon, thou art our medicine-man. Gibbs is to fall desperate sick with cramps and thou art to cure him with a mixture of wormwood, peppers, dandelion, and stewed snails, a portion of which thou mayst afterward present to the king as a precious medicament. See to it that the concoction be very hot and bitter."

"That is all very well for Huntoon, but hard on my poor gizzard," muttered Gibbs.

"Pshaw! thy gizzard is like leather already from thy custom of strong potations, and were the drink less stinging than fire-water, thou wouldst not know when to swallow, and mightst strangle to death by taking it in at the windpipe. There, lads, yonder

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lies the inlet. Put your helm hard-a-port, Hamor ! Allington, get ready the boat on the davits ! ”

’T is a great thing for a man when his opportunity jumps with his talents. Here was this Pory who had lain idle for months at a time in a debtor’s prison, and whom I, for all my liking, had reckoned but a good-for-naught and a ne’er-do-weel, now, face to face with peril and difficulty, showing himself a born leader of men.

“Before we go ashore,” cried I, “three cheers for our gallant captain, John Pory ! ”

The cheers were given with a will, and the noise of our shouting brought the savages trooping down to the water’s edge. ’T was the first time ever I saw a crowd of naturals together, and I hesitate not to say that I little liked the sight.

Their skin was of the color of dull copper, their hair shaved on the side of the head and cut in a stiff ridge along the top, like the comb of a cock. Their bodies were tattooed in fantastic designs, and further decorated with strings of beads and the skins of animals fastened together by the claws slant-ways across the breast, while from their ears hung dead rats, the rat’s tail through the hole in the ear, so it swung hideously to and fro as the savage walked. Truly their silent aspect was terrifying enough, but when were added wild yells

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and the waving of gleaming tomahawks, they were dreadful beyond words.

I knew not how my comrades felt, but one man as he stepped ashore would gladly have found himself back again on the "Red Fox," or better still, in James City.

"Whatever happens, Huntoon, keep close at my side," whispered Pory.

"Ay, that will I. A leech can stick no closer."

Pory laughed as though I had intended a play on words, but, sooth to say, I was never in a less jesting mood.

We were welcomed, however, with every mark of friendliness. A brave, who, judging from the number of chains he wore, must have been a great man in the tribe, conducted us to the presence of the king, whom we found seated in state upon a couch covered with blankets, his warriors ranged behind him, spears in hand; and his women squatting before him on mats, not over-nice.

I can see Pory to this day, as he stood there with the light of the fire playing on his face and his good sword gleaming by his side, — a man, every inch of him.

We gathered behind him at a respectful distance holding our muskets as the savages held their

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spears, and imitating their looks of reverence for our chief.

Tom Salvage, kneeling on the ground, interpreted the words of each potentate in turn.

"You are welcome, white man!"

"Thanks, noble king! I am come bearing messages of friendship from my master, King James of England, to his brother the King of Accomac."

"It is well. Come hither and sit upon my blanket, and I will share with you my pouch of bright Orinoco and my pipe of Powhatan clay."

"The honor is too great," said Pory, bowing low, but with an indescribable side-glance at me. "Ere I accept the invitation, permit me to present at least a portion of my offerings."

With this, Hamor and Gibbs, who had been lugging the heavy chest from the shore, now set it down in the centre of the circle. Pory, stepping forward with much ceremony, brake the seal and laying back the lid, spread out the knives and the beads, the blankets and Bibles.

To my surprise, the eyes of the grim Indian king glistened most at sight of the books, and he insisted at once on Salvage's reading a chapter to him. The interpreter opened to the account of the Creation (which I confess hath ever seemed to me rather dull reading), but the king listened to

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every word with much attention. When it was finished, he remarked that he himself was like Adam in that he had only one wife at a time. He took the book and held it tightly, as if he felt sure it contained incantations which if he could but master them, would teach him the secret of the white man's power.

"These gifts are worthy of your king," said he. "Pray tell me what he would condescend to accept from me in return!"

The words savored of irony, but the Indian's mask was unmoved and showed naught of his feeling. Even Pory's assurance was abashed for a moment, but he answered smoothly:—

"My master desireth nothing so much as to live in amity with your Majesty. For the moment, we are short of grain and would be glad to buy yours, and we would like your royal permission to till the ground at Accomac, and to impale and fortify to guard us against our enemies and yours."

The eyes of the old king gleamed keen as a dagger for an instant. Then he answered:—

"The King of Accomac needs not the white man to protect him against the red. Grain you shall have; for the rest, it must be considered in council. Meanwhile, be at home in Accomac!"

When the interview was ended, the same brave

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who guided us to the presence of the king, presented himself again to escort us to our sleeping quarters. It proved that, by the king's orders, we were to be lodged in one of the royal wigwams, and at first we were much pleased by this mark of favor; but the heat and the smells and the fleas proved so troublesome that we were fain to betake ourselves to the open air; where, spreading my blanket beneath the boughs of a mighty pine, I fell upon sweet slumber, and straightway forgot all troubles, difficulties, and dangers.



CHAPTER VI.

WHAT BEFELL AT ACCOMAC.

THE next morning, when we had washed ourselves in the clear waters of the bay, and dried our skins by the aid of a fan of feathers (the gift of the Queen of Accomac), we sat us down to our breakfast, which consisted of sod bread. This ill-boiled dough was so disgusting to me that I would have left it untouched, but Pory motioned to me that swallow it I must, and the keen and suspicious glances of the naturals enforced his commands.

When this substitute for a meal was at an end, we wandered about among the wigwams, I keeping ever close to Pory as he had bid me, and Salvage along with us. Presently the king who had been showing us his rows of maize and other grain growing tall and ripe in the August sunshine, motioned mysteriously to Pory and finally drew

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us into a thicket. Here he unclasped the bear skin from about his neck and pointed to his naked breast, making strange sounds the while.

"What saith he?" Pory asked of our interpreter.

"He asks if you see any deformity on his breast."

"Tell him no; but for thy life add not, what is more the truth, that mine eyes ne'er before lighted on so ugly an object in nature."

'T was with difficulty that Salvage did keep a straight face while translating the civil portion of his captain's answer: "He saith 'nay.'"

"Then no more," said the king, "is there any deformity within; but all is pure and sincere. Therefore come freely into my country, and welcome!"

Pory bowed low in response to this proffer of hospitality, and bade Salvage make answer that we accepted his welcome in the spirit in which 't was offered and would return it whenever it should suit his Majesty's pleasure to come to James City. But to me apart he said: "I like not altogether the aspect of this fellow. He is too civil and too subtle."

While we stood thus in conclave, a messenger came up breathless with haste to make known to us how one of our men was taken suddenly with

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cramps, and doubled himself in convulsions as one possessed.

“Trouble yourselves no more over so slight a thing,” quoth Pory with a lordly wave of his hand. “I have with me a medicine-man who can cure the sick by his very presence. He carries a vial which containeth a liquid, hot to the tongue, but healing to the inwards. Take us speedily therefore now to the sick man !”

The Indian led on and we followed, — I, for one, mightily ashamed of our stratagem. We found Gibbs lying on the ground in front of the wigwams, writhing in well-feigned convulsions. When he caught sight of us, the spasms increased in violence. Kneeling down by his side, I poured out some drops of the mixture of wormwood and peppers and spearmint, which having swallowed, he straightway revived, and sitting up, called for cold water, which indeed he needed much, since the medicine had gone nigh to choke him.

The king, seeing this marvel, begged that we would give him what was left in the vial ; I gave it him and he showed much delight, whereupon Pory promised him that he should have a jugful of it if he consented to the requests of Governor Yerely.

That evening a feast and a dance were given in

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our honor ; and I do protest that mine eyes ne'er beheld a sight so dreadful to look upon, as these naked savages capering about with wild whoops and waving of weapons around their camp fire. I was glad when it was over and we laid ourselves down once more in the shadow of the tree. But whether because of the emptiness of my stomach (for my hunger did refuse to be appeased by their vile dishes) or that my brain was so full of the figures of dancing savages, I could not sleep, but lay staring up at the sky between the dark branches of the giant pine.

I watched the constellations slowly sinking, one by one, toward the shores where James City lay, and I wished that I could travel with them and look down on a little cottage, bare and rude and thrusting itself boldly into the dusty road, yet for me the only cottage in the world, the shrine where I had laid my heart.

The hours passed on, unmarked save by the dew dropping sharply from the fresh pine needles above to the withered ones beneath.

"Heigh ho!" I thought, "'t is tedious work, this lying awake alone. Why should I be cursed with sleeplessness when all these men round me are sleeping as soundly as dogs by a fire-side?—Hulloa!"

What Befell at Accomac.

With my eyes half open, I had caught glimpse, in the dim twilight before the dawn, of that which dispelled all dreamy reveries, and sent my blood bounding madly. What I saw was a weird and dark face peering at me with evil snake-like eyes from behind a hemlock tree at a distance of perhaps twenty feet.

Tossing my arms above my head and turning like one who seeks in his sleep to find a position of greater ease, I began to snore. At the same time, I cautiously opened my eyes just a crack, but wide enough to see another Indian behind another tree at about the same distance as the first. We were surrounded! That was evident; but what should I do? To move my arm might be the signal for an attack, sure to prove a wholesale slaughter of our sleeping men.

At length I bethought me that an old physician had told me how he had oft noted as a singular thing, that any one firmly bidden in sleep to do a certain thing, would, in nine cases out of ten, obey, before the conscious will awoke.

I resolved to test it now.

Without moving a muscle, I whispered low but firmly in the ear of Pory, who lay next me: —

“Blow thy whistle!”

Opening his eyes drowsily, he hesitated one

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awful second, then drawing his silver whistle from the breast of his leather jerkin, he blew on it thrice.

It was the alarm signal we had agreed upon on board the "Red Fox," and the men responded by leaping to their feet, each grasping the musket on which he had lain. The shrill note had startled Pory himself wide-awake, and his swift eye took in the situation at a glance.

"Come on, you skulking wretches!" he cried, as he caught sight of one and another dusky form hiding in the underbrush. We are only ten, but we are a match for a hundred like you.

"Salvage, bid the king's messenger, him that hath been our guide, stand forth, and explain this treachery, if he can!"

In answer to Salvage's summons, the Indian warrior came out from behind a tree. He looked on me with murder written on his face.

"How now?" quoth Salvage "Is this the end of your king's fine promises, that he would have us murdered in our beds?"

"The king," answered the Indian, "hath discovered the treachery of the pale-faces who would rob him of his son, and he hath doomed to death the medicine-man who hath so betrayed him."

"What folly is this?"

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"'Tis no folly, white-face ! The king's son, young Oropax, is sick unto death. When he was ill with fever this night, the king did give him the medicine in the vial, and ever since he hath grown worse, and now he raves and knows not his own father. Therefore is the king angered against the white-faces, and vows he will have a life for a life."

"So," said Pory, coldly, "he was like Adam yesterday. To-day he has become a Moses. Tell him, Salvage, that he is all wrong ; that we have wished the lad no harm, nor any to himself ; but as he receiveth us so unkindly, and basely withdraweth his hospitality, we will be gone across the water and he shall see us no more."

With this, Pory gave the word to the men to close in, and we turned to the path leading to our skiff ; but we found, as I had expected, our way blocked by angry faces, while threatening voices round us called : " Give up the medicine-man, and the rest may go ! "

"Pory," said I, "have done with this ! Sacrifice not ten lives in the vain attempt to save one ! Go you to the ship and leave me here to take my chances ! I will make a fight for my life ; but God knows I value it not o'er highly."

"There is truth in what thou sayest," answered

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Pory. "We stand no chance whatever here in open fight, ten against a hundred. It shall be as thou hast said."

My reason told me that he was right, yet it cut me that he would give me up so readily.

"Rolfe," continued Pory, "lead these men to the skiff, and withdraw to the shallop. Wait till six o'clock to-morrow morning. Then, if we come not, depart for Kiccowtan, and return with whatsoever men you can muster, to rescue us if living, to avenge us if we be dead."

That one word *we*, how it takes the sting from death itself! Yet was I more than ever loath that my friend should thus throw away his life; but he would hear no entreaties.

"Be silent!" he said sternly. "John Pory never yet deserted a friend, and this plight is owing after all to me and my scheming. Rolfe, begone!"

"Faith," said Rolfe, with a sorrowful countenance, "'tis the hardest command I did ever receive."

"I believe it, to a gallant soul like thine, but none the less, it must be obeyed. Room there for my men. To the boat! Forward, march!"

"Ay, Salvage," he continued, noticing that the interpreter still lingered, "'tis well. We shall have need of thee. Bide thou here!"

What Befell at Accomac.

There we stood, we three, and watched our comrades disappearing thro' the tangle of the trees in the gray, desolate dawn.

"Now," said Pory, turning to the warrior, more like a conqueror than a prisoner, "we will to your master ; lead on !"

On we went accordingly, trampling the crackling boughs beneath our feet, and ever and anon putting back with both hands the pine twigs which slapped us smartly in the face as we passed. When we were come to the king's wigwam, our guide lifted the flap of matting and bade us enter. Thus we did.

'T was a strange scene that met our sight thro' the murky air, thick with the smoke of a smouldering fire, and foul with the breath of a dozen men and women crowded together round the bed of pine boughs on which lay the form of a youth in delirium, tossing his arms and moaning and making strange, barbaric noises.

A native medicine-man bent above him uttering weird incantations, and shaking a rattle made from the tail of a snake, which he whirled about his head whilst he squirted water from his own mouth over the youth's body.

As I entered, this man cast on me such a look of malignity as made me sure that it was more to

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his malice than aught else that we owed our present plight.

Pory, too, caught the glance, and said to me in an undertone, not without grim humor :—

“I might have known it. Two of a trade can never agree.”

For myself I determined at once to open war with this man. I therefore threw as much disdain as I felt into my tone, as I bade Salvage to ask of the king why he allowed his son to be put to death thus by a medicine-man who knew not his own business.

“He says,” answered Salvage, “that ’t is thy drugs that have brought him to this.”

“Of course,” said I, “such a powerful and beneficent medicine as the king’s vial contained, cannot be used carelessly. The cure for cramps may kill a fever.”

“Listen now, O King! Our lives are in thy hands; and I give up mine a ready sacrifice, and my body to be burned at the stake, if I heal not thy son.”

For the first time the dark looks of the king lightened a little, as my words were translated to him.

“Try, then,” he answered, briefly. “Cure and live, or kill and die!”

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With the last words a tomahawk fell clashing to the floor, and I saw Salvage shudder. I realized that I was playing a desperate game, but my spirits rose with the danger, and I felt myself master of the situation.

"Your Majesty's trust shall be justified. Give me but my way, and the lad's life is saved. First, send away that man!" I pointed toward the scowling medicine-man, who seized up a bow and arrow at my words, crying out that the One Alone called Kiwassa demanded my blood; but at a signal from the king, two braves pinioned his arms and marched him away. I then sent Salvage and an Indian to bring all our blankets, which I piled one on top of other beneath the shade of a tree, for the August sun was already waxing hot. To this bed I had the poor youth carried, still waving and tossing of his arms. Kneeling beside him I laid my hand on his head — 't was burning hot; then on his heart; 't was beating with uneven violence, like the waves on a rocky coast; thumping as 't would burst the ribs, and then retiring till I could scarce count its throbbing. I did not hide from myself that it was a desperate case. I had seen men like that die in an hour; but I would do my best. Selecting three Indian youths, I bade them take the leather buckets which we had brought

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ashore, and fill them at the runlet at the base of the hill, bringing it fresh and fresh. While they were gone, I set Pory and Salvage to tearing up their underwear into strips. When the water was come, I dipped my hand therein, and joyed to find it cold as winter. Plunging the cloths into the first bucketful, I drew them out dripping, and covered the body of Oropax from head to foot. So hot was he, that the cloths on the head were heated almost before those on the feet were applied. But I saw with much relief of mind that the second cloths were not so hot, and placing my hand on the heart, I found it calmer.

Opening my medicine-chest, I drew out a vial filled with the essence of the deadly night-shade ; a rank poison, but in such cases as these and used with care, a most valuable medicament. A few drops I poured into a small tumbler of glass given me by a Venetian in London. To the dose I added a cupful of water, and raising it to the lad's lips, bade him drink.

No sooner had he quaffed than his head and arms ceased to move restlessly, and ere long, I saw with delight that he slept. Calling for the queen's feather fan I waved it above him, thereby both driving away the insects which hereabouts do be

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most abundant and annoying, and also keeping up a grateful current of air.

In an hour Oropax awoke and called for drink. I gave him freely all he craved and of the coldest, tho' there be those in London would have found fault with me therefor; but so far from hurting, it did marvellously refresh him, so that he sat up and called aloud for his father.

From this moment I breathed freely. "Hurrah!" I cried to Pory, "we have fought with death and won!"

"Lad! lad!" he said kindly, with his arm about my neck, "thou hast saved not him alone, but us all."

When the soft shades of twilight had fallen and the youth lay in quiet slumbers once more, the king sent for me. "Go!" said Pory; "I will sit beside the sick youth and see that no villain of a natural comes near to undo your work."

When I was in the king's presence I marvelled much at the change which a few hours had wrought. Suspicion and distrust had given way to a friendly aspect. With his own hands he hung chains of beads around my neck and set a cap of buckskin, stiff with embroidery, on my head. Finally he bade me say what I wished of him, and I should have it even to the half of his kingdom.

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"We ask naught," said I, "save leave to depart for our own country, bearing such grain as you are willing to sell us. We would counsel you in friendship to detain us no longer, lest the anger of our king be aroused against you, for he is mighty to avenge."

The king must have been at heart a craven, or else he had heard wondrous tales of the prowess of the English, for he quailed at my words. While I was uttering them we heard a shriek of terror, and beheld crowds of savages who came running from the shore, cowering round the king and crying out that the English warriors were planning vengeance, and sending fire-balls from the ship, which would surely burn their village, as one wigwam was already on fire.

"Go, then!" said the king suddenly to me. "'Twere well to be at peace with men who can save or destroy life at will." Stopping for no second thoughts, I hastened back to Pory, who straightway sent Salvage to the shore to make signals that the firing be stopped and the skiff be sent for us. Lines of Indians carried down the sacks we had brought, filled with grain, and we made ready to put off; but a messenger came running to say that young Oropax would fain speak with me; and accordingly Salvage and I went back,

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not without detecting some uneasiness in Pory's eye ; but I had no misgivings now.

The Indian lad grasped my hand, though his was almost too weak to hold it.

"Give him every two hours of that gruel Salvage made," I said to the woman standing by. She nodded with a grunt. I believe, like all women, she resented the idea that a man could cook.

"Oropax," explained Salvage, who had been bending near the lad's lips to catch his feeble accents, "desires to wish you farewell, to thank you for saving his life, and to bid you ask him for some gift."

"Tell him," I answered, "that when he is well again, he shall shoot for me the biggest black bear in Accomac, and send the skin to me at James City."

The Indian youth looked up, mightily pleased at my request, and with another pressure of the hand he and I parted.

When we were come to the shallop, our comrades fell upon our necks and wept over us, for they had looked on us as doomed, and mourned for us as already dead. As dawn brightened we set sail from harbor, and thus ended our visit to the Laughing King of Accomac.



CHAPTER VII.

CUPID.

THE "Red Fox" shook out her sails briskly, as if only too glad to leave behind the treacherous shores of Accomac; but no sooner were we fairly out in the Bay than the wind fell, and we lay for hours in a dead calm beneath the broiling August sun.

We were thankful enough for to sight Point Comfort at eventide, and to anchor off Kiccowtan for the night. Here John Rolfe left us, to my sorrow, for I reckoned him a stanch and true man.

It was thus on the twentieth day of August, and the second after leaving the eastern shore, that our pinnace again touched at James City.

"Canst thou tell me," I asked of a gallant standing on the wharf, with a swashbuckler air, and a plumed hat on the side of his head, "what was that strange craft we noted as we came in, anchored near the shore?"

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"'T is a Dutch man-of-war," he answered. "It came in yestere'en bringing a cargo of twenty blacks, — men, women, and children. They were sold this morn, at public outcry, to the highest bidders, for field hands and household servants. Thereby hangs a jest, oh, an excellent jest!"

Here the gallant brake off and stood holding his sides as though they were like to split with laughter. When he was recovered enough to speak, "Thou knowest Spelman, Pory?" he said.

"Ay, 't was he that defamed the governor, and was sentenced to lose his title and to serve seven years as interpreter to his Excellency."

"Well, the sentence hath not cut the cock's comb. He carries his head as haughtily as ever. You must know he sets up for a lady-killer and a squire of dames. Now it seems that he hath cast sheep's-eyes at the unwed maid, Elizabeth Devon, since ever the ship 'Susan' came in."

I dropped the sack of grain which I was engaged in hoisting to the wharf from the hold of the "Red Fox," and drew nearer to the speaker.

"Now," he continued, "when the negars were sold thus at outcry, the captain purchased, for ten pound, a lively boy of some twelve summers old, and sent him as a gift to the fair lady, with a note pinned to the front of his garments. The letter

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stated that the black boy's name was Cupid, and the sender prayed that she would accept the gift of him as a slave, and of himself, Henry Spelman, as a husband."

"Insolent!" cried I, tho' I had been fully resolved to hold my tongue. "And she? What said she?"

"Why, there riseth the cream o' the jest. She straightway despatched the boy back to the sender with another note pinned to his back, wherein she said that when she should wed, she should expect her husband to be her slave, and therefore should need none other; but that, as she had no intention of marrying at present, she counselled Captain Spelman to bestow himself and his negar elsewhere."

"Good! Good!" cried the loungers in chorus.

"Ay, good it was," continued the first speaker, quickened to greater liveliness by the success of his story. "You should have seen Spelman, when he did receive the note. He was e'en raging, and such a fool as to read it out to the crowd of us, so that, the news spreading, he is become the sport of James City."

"I like the girl's spirit," quoth Pory. "I would rather have her than forty tame Griseldas that come at the first man's whistle. How say you,

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Huntoon, shall we try our luck as rivals to the captain and his negar?"

My heart grew hot within me as I listened to this light talk concerning Elizabeth Romney.

"For Heaven's sake, Pory," said I, "leave off thy buffoonery! — and, for the rest of you, either make way there or lend a hand; for this grain must be stored inside the palisades before night."

Pory looked at me for an instant in dumb surprise, and then, with a grunt hard to interpret, shouldered his sack and took up the line of march for the gate. The others followed, and the grain was soon safely stowed away in the magazine.

The next morning I was honored by a command to wait upon Governor Yerely. I dressed myself with extra care, but with a painful sense of the shortcomings of my wardrobe for such an occasion.

I longed only for the old days at Oxford when a scholar's gown covered all deficiencies, and the fashion of the cap changed not, as doth the habit of the court, like a weather-cock, when the king doth blow on it.

I wondered much, as I walked along, that the governor should have sent for me, whose name, I thought, he could scarce have heard. "But," said I to myself, "'t is a great thing to be nobody; and never to be heard of, is to be heard no ill of."

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When I was shown into the governor's room, I found him seated in a chair of oak before a long, cross-legged table, strewn with documents and State-papers.

He received me right graciously; yet his first words much amazed and disconcerted me.

"Master Huntoon, thy dress is over-plain. I like not thy coat, — 't is too bare!"

I knew not where to look, so vexed was I, and withal so vexed with myself for being vexed.

"'T is passing plain, my lord, but yet as rich as beseemeth a poor scholar and soldier of fortune. Were I the Head of a Hundred, I might go bravely tricked out with gold lace; but 't were ill fitting that one who hath no gold in his purse, should wear it on his person."

"Thou art right, young man. It were, as thou sayest, most ill done, unfit, and unbecoming, and like to win thee a lodging in ye Guard House. Yet have I a fancy for seeing thee thus decked, and so there's no way out of it but that thou shouldst be made Head of a Hundred."

My looks so spake the bewilderment of my mind that the governor took pity on me and explained.

"My secretary, Master Pory, hath so set forth thy talents and acquirements, and in particular thy

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services on this expedition to Accomac, wherein he says thy coolness and prudence did equal thy courage and contrivance, that he hath persuaded me to place thee in charge of Flower Da Hundred, a colony further up the river, which hath lately lost its commander through an illness which compelled him to seek medical treatment.

“Now, thou wilt have no such excuse for quitting thy post, else wilt thou stand confessed no physician ; argal a fraud ; argal to be hanged.”

“Your Excellency,” I stammered, “you do bewilder me with this kindness, which I have had so little opportunity to deserve. If Master Pory hath represented that I have done anything out of the ordinary there in Accomac, he hath exaggerated trifles out of all semblance to truth in the cause of friendship, and I would not be beholden to such misprision for so great and sudden advancement.”

“Tush, tush, man ! I have eyes in my head, and ears as well, and a discernment to match. Do not set thyself up to be a better judge than I as to whom I shall appoint to office ! Only see to it that thou do thy work well, else shall I have spoiled a good doctor to make a poor commander ; and in sooth, had we not tidings of another physician on his way hither, I would not let thee go, for I hear thy skill well spoke of —”

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“ Thanks, my lord ! but — ”

“ Butt not against thy good fortune, unless indeed thou likest too well to loaf about the tavern here at James City, and art slow to betake thyself to pioneer life in a distant settlement.”

“ Your Excellency,” cried I, eagerly, “ for nothing do I thank thee more than for this chance to get away from James City. ’T is — ’t is too near the sea ; and I fear rheumatism from the dampness of the air.”

Sir George Yerely’s keen eyes were fixed on mine as I spake, and I felt them pierce to the core of my device.

“ The reason thou hast given is false,” said he slowly, “ and ’t is the foolisher that thou wert not called to give any. Ay ! I am glad to see thee redden. Now, thy friend Pory will look me in the face innocent as a babe, and invent the most enormous fabrications ; but thou art young at the business, and, trust me, ’t is a practice that ill suits a gentleman.”

“ Good my lord, I do acknowledge the justice of the reproach and if you do insist, I will tell you the true reason, though it is in its nature most private, and touching mine own heart alone.”

“ Nay, nay, it is not for me to meddle with a lad’s quarrels or perhaps a lad’s love affairs. Do

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but serve the State faithfully and well, and thou wilt have earned thy gold lace honestly, and mayst hide what private sentiments thou wilt under the breast of thine official coat. The settlement yonder at Flower Da Hundred groweth unruly without a head. How soon canst thou be gone?"

"To-night, my lord."

"Good! I like promptness. But thy parting from us need not be so abrupt as that. If thou art in readiness, in three days time 't will serve."

"In three days let it be, then, and I will strive diligently that I may not fail the trust reposed in me."

"If thou indeed strive diligently, thou wilt not fail."

With this he gave me permission to withdraw, and bowing low, I went out. In the hall-way I was overtaken by Pory.

"Hello!" he cried.

"Ah! Jack," said I, "what hast thou been doing?"

"Doing? I? Why, nothing save cooking larks to drop into the cap of a good-for-nothing, who does n't know enough to hold them when they are in. Oh! I heard it all from my desk behind the door. A fine character you and the governor gave me between you!"

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"How can I thank you for this advancement which I owe to your influence!"

"Oh, so you've discovered that I have an influence; for all it struck you as so fine a jest a fortnight ago!"

"Behold me, Master Pory, prostrate at your feet in self-abasement! You have taken a most generous revenge."

"I am more beholden to you for the compliment than you need be to me for the office. A compliment is an accomplished fact, whereas an office is but an opportunity for work, which my stomach never relished over-much. But now must I get me back to mine, for the 'God-Speed' sails to-day, bearing despatches which I must savor and sweeten ere they are closed with the governor's seal. Farewell till afternoon, when we will talk further of the future."

With this he vanished like the very Jack-in-the-Box he was, and I took up my way to my lodgings. Yet being there, I could find no rest, neither absorb myself in reading nor in writing, for that my soul was in so great a tumult. Joy and sorrow, success and failure, hope and despondency battled it together in my breast.

At length, after an hour or two, worn out with the conflict, I picked up my hat and sallied forth

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to try what distraction I could find out of doors. I had gone but a few rods ere I saw Pory and Henry Spelman standing in the centre of a group of men who were discussing the arrival of the Dutch ship, and the effect on the colony, of the coming of the blacks, which, Pory said, he feared would do away, in time, with the indented servants, who were a great blessing to the settlement.

From that beginning, the talk was tossed about like a ball in the tennis court, till Tom Pierce, the gallant whom we had encountered on the wharf the day before, began a jesting attack on Spelman anent the ill-fate of his purchase in human livestock.

Both men were somewhat the worse for liquor, and Spelman chafed beneath the jibes, tho' he strove to cloak his vexation under a tone of bravado.

"Look!" cried one who till now had borne no part in the talk. "If I be not mistaken, the haughty maid herself is walking this way on t'other side of the street."

I turned at his word, and saw, advancing toward us, a damsel, clad in a robe of rough brown serge with long pointed sleeves falling over closer ones of white. Her veil, which was also white, reached to the hem of her skirt, completely hiding her face from view.

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But it was as idle for Elizabeth Romney to go forth thus and fancy herself disguised, as for the ostrich to hide his head in the sand and think to escape notice. Her slender foot, her lithe, light figure, the carriage of her head, the very air with which she set one foot before the other, proclaimed her birth and breeding.

“Speak to her, Spelman!” cried Pierce, the tormentor. “Mayhap she will pay more heed to thy speech than to thy letter.”

“Thou durst not,” said I, sternly.

“Who says ‘durst not’ to a soldier?” cried the captain. “Ye shall see if I fear man or woman either.”

Ere any could stop him, he had lurched across the street and blocked the lady’s path.

“We were speaking of thee but now in council, and we have decided that thy mien is too lofty for one come three thousand miles to find a husband. I am therefore commissioned to pray thee —”

Before he could get further, she whom he addressed, drawing aside her skirts as from some noxious animal, sought to pass in disdainful silence. At this rebuff the watchers on the other side the road began to snicker; whereon the captain was so incensed that he quite forgot his manners, and strove forcibly to pull aside, or at least to

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peep under the veil which the lady held firmly down.

I would not have stood by to see this done to a barmaid, and for Elizabeth Romney — I strode across the street and taking him, like a puppy, by the nape of the neck, I flung him into the mud. Perchance my handling was ruder than I knew, for I perceived that he did not rise again. But I counted it more the effect of his drink than of my force, for a man in liquor is like a ship with a shifting ballast, and careeneth with a light blow.

I walked on by Mistress Romney's side for the few paces that lay betwixt us and Dame Cary's door.

"Wilt thou not come in?" she asked in a voice withheld with difficulty from tremulousness.

"Nay, mistress, not till nightfall, when I will, with thy permission, attend upon thine arm, and shall hope for good accounts of its advance toward recovery."

With this I left her and returned to the spot where Spelman had fallen, and where he still lay sprawling on his back, like a turtle that hath been upset. The loungers around him looked somewhat affrighted lest he should never come to himself. But I knew better, and pulling a bottle of sal ammoniac from the pocket of my jerkin, I held

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it to his nose, till it did speedily prick him back to life.

Unfortunately for me, his choler awoke at the same moment with his consciousness, and as he rose and brushed the mud from his hosen, he cast on me a look of malignity.

“I regret —” I began; but he brake in rudely:

“Regret me no regrets! You shall hear from me, and that right soon, I promise you.” And he walked off still scowling.

“You have a promising quarrel on your hands,” said Dick Pace, who was come to James City to load his shallop with grain to take back with him to “Pace’s Paine.”

“Faith,” says Pory, “an I have not forgot my Cambridge Latin, ’tis the first time ever Pace stood for war. Nonsense, man! When Captain Spelman (and I know not why we still give him the title, since the Council did deprive him of it) when Spelman, I say, hath slept off his liquor, he will know full well that he got no more than his deserts when he offered insolency to a woman in the presence of Englishmen. Say no more of the matter, lest it come to the ears of the governor and kindle such a fire as none of you shall be able to quench.

“By the way, good Doctor, I have a felon on my

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finger, about which I would fain consult thee, if these gentlemen will pardon our withdrawal."

With this he drew my arm thro' his own and marched off very dignified, to his lodgings. Before we reached there I had as completely forgotten my quarrel as he his felon, which to say truth was more in his fancy than on his finger.

When we were come into his house and the door was shut, he threw his arms about me and kissed me on both cheeks in the good old English fashion, now almost gone out — more's the pity.

"So thou art to be Head of a Hundred!" he cried. "Well, see to it that thou forget not thine old friend, as Pharaoh's butler (or was it his baker?) forgot Joseph in the days of his prosperity. Sooth to say, youngster, I have come to love thee well and 't is more of a trial than I thought for to let thee go, tho' it is but beyond the bend o' the river!"

"And I am as loath to be leaving thee. Say no more, I pray thee, lest thou unman me quite and I shed tears like a homesick schoolboy."

"Then drown thy tears in a cup of sack with me," quoth he, filling two generous wooden noggins. "I drink the health of Humphrey Huntoon, Head of a Hundred!"



CHAPTER VIII.

PARTING.

IT was with a heavy heart that I drew near the door of Miles Cary's cottage this night. Now that all was settled I began to wish it unsettled again, and to regret that I had been so quick to accept the governor's offer.

But I reproached myself for this weakness and I said to that coward, my heart, "Thou art a fickle and treacherous counsellor, that sayest one thing in the morning and another at night. The question is settled. This maid and I must part. The when and the how can matter little."

Outside the window I stopped, for I saw a slender figure flitting to and fro, and I caught a snatch of an old song that I had whistled many a time and oft along the cliffs of Devon, with the gulls circling overhead, and the breakers thundering under my feet:—

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By my true love's bower, a rose,
Fresh and fair and fragrant grows.
On its briar, my hand I've torn;
I've missed the rose and pulled the thorn.
Heigh-ho,
Joy and wo !

Betty Romney's voice was a part of herself, not soft and sentimental, but clear and triumphant, tho' she sang of grief and thorns. With my hand on the latch, I stood still to try if she would go on again, and when she did, I leaned back against the wall listening as I have listened for the rare note of the piping bullfinch in the forest : —

Love is even such a flower,
Fresh and fragrant for an hour,
Yet, lest my poor heart be torn,
I'll have neither rose nor thorn.
Heigh-ho,
Joy and wo !

“Heigh-ho, joy and wo !” I said, entering. “It is a song as old as life, ay, mistress Betty ?”

“So thou art come !” cried my lady, throwing down on the table the flowers she was sorting for a nosegay to garnish the simple evening meal.

“Thou art welcome. But where is the bear-skin thou didst promise to bring for the back of my chair ?”

“Faith,” said I, “I thought myself but too

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lucky to get off with mine own skin to give heed to a bear's, or to my idle promise."

"Oh, ay! 'Tis ever thus with men. They will swear you mighty oaths, but in their fulfilment are they wondrous modified."

"I hear," quoth I, stung by the wasp of her woman's wit, "that thou hast not lacked either for vows or offerings in mine absence."

Her eyes blazed up with a light, half anger, half laughter.

"I have indeed met with two offerings, and of scarce commodities, — a heathen and a heart. Oh, Humphrey! Thou hadst died of laughing, couldst thou have seen that poor little negar thing, with the hair on his head all kinky, like the wool on old Michael's black sheep, and his short white suit against the blackness of his legs and arms, and then the note pinned to his breast, — a note as full of fancy flourishes as a Frenchman's dancing. Troth, it made me laugh for the first time since ever I came to this dismal land!"

"No doubt," answered I, stiff as the ramrod of my match-lock musket. "No doubt it was monstrous funny for the daughter of Sir William Romney to receive notes and gifts from a roystering gallant! And no doubt it was vastly amusing for me to hear men jesting about her on the wharf

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yestere'en, and yet again to see her veil twitched in James City street this morning !”

I know not how it chanced that I was drawn on to speak thus in childish anger. I took shame to myself ere the words were uttered ; and still more when Mistress Betty answered with quiet dignity.

“ Sir William Romney’s daughter,” quoth she, speaking low and yet very proud, “ hath no need of any help save from her own dignity and virtue to protect her from insult.”

“ Bravely spoken !” cried I, filled with admiration for her high spirit, “ yet it is none the less false. Let me speak freely with thee for once if never more. Thine arm is almost healed and can go in a sling for another se’n-night, and after that I trust ’t will serve thee as well as its fellow. It is no longer as thy physician that I speak, but as thy friend, almost thy brother. And I beg — I *entreat* of thee, to go home !”

She made a motion as though she would stop my speech, but I was resolved to be heard.

“ This James City is as evil a place as the round world can show for a young, unprotected maid like thee. ’Tis filled with gallants, and soldiers of fortune, yea, and even with jail-birds and the off-scouring of London slums. Canst thou bide here, and alone ?”

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"I am not alone," she answered. "Kate Cary was my cousin's tiring woman for seven years, and she hath never yet flinched in faith and loyalty to me. Besides," — and here she sparkled forth the intoxication of her smile, — "have I no right to count something on mine old friend, or him who at least was wont to call himself such — Humphrey Huntoon?"

The words of simple trust pierced my soul and made me feel as if I were but a base deserter from a post of honor. Love swelled in my heart, but I saw quite clearly that it was friendship alone that filled her mind.

"The man thou hast once called friend," said I, "must needs carry his head higher ever after. Count upon me, indeed, and be sure I can have no nearer duty, and no dearer pleasure than to give my life, if need be, in thy service! But at the present moment I am no longer mine own master. Governor Yerely hath appointed me Head of Flower Da Hundred. Thither for a time I must betake me, and I should be loth to think of thee when I was thus far away, subject to such insult as thou didst meet this day, close by thine own door."

I said all this hurriedly, and with eyes cast down like one abashed, for I feared that she to whom I spoke looked scornfully on me as a pol-

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troon and a deserter, or worse still, that she was thinking sorrowfully on the solitariness of her position here when I was gone, with none to turn to for aid or counsel.

My thoughts showed how little I understood the nature of Elizabeth Romney.

When I looked up I found her gazing steadfastly at me. Her face was quite white, but a wonderful pride and gladness shone in her eyes.

"I might have known it, Humphrey!" she cried. "They have found thee out, as they were sure to do — only 't is come sooner than I thought. Thou wilt be a great man. When thou art come, as may happen some day, to the dignity of governor of the colony, remember, I pray, that thou didst first practice governing on little Betty Romney by the brook that runs past Cumnor Hall."

"Heaven send me few such rebellious subjects!" said I, jesting, with a lump in my throat.

"When subjects rebel 't is oftenest the fault of the tyrant who governs," quoth she, still striving to be merry, tho' the big tears stood in her eyes.

"I would I could play the tyrant over Fate for thy happiness," I answered, and then I said: "Couldst thou not, now we are so near parting, trust me with the secret of thine exile? Perhaps some help may be found even in my poor counsel."

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“Alas! it is a matter past all help of counsel,” she sighed, “and even the Head of a Hundred would be powerless therein; yet now thou askest in the way of kindness and not in anger, as on that first night, I will tell thee all, and welcome the chance.”

“Thou hast misprised my interest in thee, Mistress Betty, since ever we did meet on these shores; but let that pass and go on with thy story! Thou didst quarrel with thy father past all hope of reconciliation, — is it not so?”

“Ah, ’t is but too true, and it would seem that the fault must be mine, yet in looking back, I cannot think it so.”

“Perchance your father asked that of you which neither he nor any man had the right to demand.”

“Ah! how you help me. But how could you know?”

“Shall I tell thee? Well, then, a little bird from Oxford, one of those perhaps, that build their nests in the ivy that grows round the grey walls of old Balliol, whispered in mine ear that thy father sought an alliance with the House of Chetwynd.”

“An alliance!” cried the girl, with a fine scorn. “Yea, it was just that. It made no difference whether I loved or loathed. No matter whether

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the man I was to wed cared a brass farthing for me, — it was an alliance! I would none of the scheme, and so I told both the earl and my father.”

“ Well, and was that not enow for them both ? ”

“ Nay, in sooth; but the more I refused, the more resolved were they. At last my father threatened that if I yielded not, he would send me to a convent in France.”

“ Pooh! ’t was but a bogie to fright thee. He dared not.”

“ Perhaps — I know not how far he would have gone. But I had seen more than once the cowed figure of a Jesuit priest, flitting like a bat about the corners of the hall after dark. And once, wakened at midnight by the sound of a tinkling bell, and creeping from my chamber to the gallery, I saw, in the hall below, my father kneeling at midnight mass and before him this same priest, who passed abroad for a parson of the New Church. I feared him and I feared my father, and I believed, as for the matter o’ that I do still believe, that between them, they would carry out their threat.”

“ Poor child! thou wert indeed but a silly dove in the nest of hawks. Whither couldst thou look for deliverance ? ”

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"In truth, I know not how all would have ended, but just then my uncle, with his wife and daughter were come on a visit to the hall. My cousin, who was ever my dearest friend, caught me one day weeping in my chamber, and would give me no rest till she had learned the secret, which indeed my father's anger had made little secret to those around us.

"'Besse,' quoth she, 'hast thou courage to carry out a plot if I do plan it for thee?'

"I answered her that I had courage for anything but this hateful marriage, though in truth my heart sank weakly at the prospect of barred windows and convent walls.

"'Weep not, pretty coz!' she said. 'Thou shalt not be dragged either to the altar or to the convent cell. Beshrew me if the wits of two maids be not a match for all the men in Christendom!'

"Having cheered me with her heartening talk, she left me and I thought she would forget; but after a few days she sought me in my closet and then she laid bare the scheme she had worked out. Oh, Humphrey! I wish you could have known Barbara well. She is so clever and so stanch and true, even if sometimes a bit headstrong."

"I can easily credit it," quoth I; "these things do oft run in families."

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Mistress Betty made a charming little mouth at me. "Your compliments," says she, "are like chameleons which change color according to the light that falls on them."

"Well, well, never mind my compliments, but tell me of your cousin's scheme!"

"Ay, give me but time, and I will."

"Her tiring woman had engaged passage for America on a ship with a company of maids who were coming out on the strange errand of making wives for the planters, but with the express understanding that none need wed save at her own free will."

"It was my cousin's plan that I should go out with this Kate Brandon, and to make the surer of not being forced into any marriage, after having fled so far to avoid the calamity, my passage was to be paid aforetime. So far the plan did not at all appal me, for the prospect appeared then far less formidable to my ignorance than would it now to mine experience."

"'But prythee, good cousin,' said I, 'how am I to make my escape from Romney and find my way to this outward-bound ship?'"

"'All that have I arranged,' she replied, 'and 't is by far the cleverest part of the plot; for it will be fooling the fox with his own brush. This morn

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I was tempted for old time's sake, to peep into the little cupboard under the tower stairs, where we were wont to play at hide and seek as children; and there what think ye I should find but a priest's robe and cowl rolled up in a cobwebby corner! "I have it!" I thought, when mine eyes fell on it; "'t is the very disguise for Besse." This shalt thou put on and be off this very night; for I have made sure that he who passes for our pious Church of England clergyman is gone to London for a week. There is no moon to-night, but that is all the better for our scheme. Thou art to slip out the little side door by the eastern tower, then through the ivied gate at nine o' the clock, and at the turn of the road thou shalt find one waiting to guide thee to the lodging of Kate Brandon, where thou shalt lie as safe hid as a mouse in a hay-stack till the sailing of the ship!"

"Faith!" cried I, "thou saidst but the truth when thou didst call this cousin of thine a clever maid. What answer didst thou make to her plan?"

"Why, truth to tell, I knew not what to say. My mind rolled now this way, now that, like a ship at sea, but chiefly it turned to the thought of my father and his anger. 'He will never let me slip away in so quiet a fashion, Bab,' said I; 'thou knowest his temper too well to expect that.'"

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“ ‘Trust that to me,’ says my cousin, whose spirit is as high as my father’s. ‘Thou art to leave on my cushion a note in which thou art to say that, being unable to bear this life longer, thou art gone to make thy home with a friend ; that thou art resolved to return no more, but to be as one dead to that father who would so readily give thee up to the death of a convent, or the worse than death of a hated marriage !’

“My wit was less nimble than my cousin’s, and I was fain to write down the words after her. But when I was done, I said, ‘Of what good will this be ?’

“ ‘That wilt thou not be here to see, but I will play the gypsy and foretell unto thee how matters will fall out. I shall carry thy note to mine uncle, and then I shall draw a long face and say that one of the maids reported seeing a priest in the corridors near midnight, and that there is already gossiping in the servants’ hall over thy disappearance, and though I know there can be no truth in it, yet I fear, if the matter come to the king’s ear, he may suspect my cousin was spirited away against her will to a convent and be sore in anger against us all. So I shall counsel him to give out that thou art gone off on a visit, and trust to thy returning of thine own free will when thou art sick and tired of thine exile !’

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“So the matter fell out, even as Barbara had planned it. We kissed and cried together and parted,—she bidding me write her whenever I could, under cover of Kate Brandon, for that she should ever hold herself responsible for my good or ill fortune.”

The maiden paused here and sighed deeply, seeming almost to have forgotten my presence; then she went on:—

“I know not if I could have done otherwise; yet it is ever a sore thought with me to remember how I crept out from my father’s house like a thief in the night, and to make the resemblance more exact, with the jewels my mother had left me, hid away in my wallet. Oh, how often in the night here when the pine-trees are murmuring sorrowfully outside my window, I have fancied my father there alone in the dark old rooms at Romney Hall; and how I have longed to go to him and beg him to forgive me and let things be as they were in the old days! But that can never be now — never — no, never!”

The girl’s voice, which had been quite steady and cheerful at the beginning, sank at the end into a passive melancholy, which smote me too with sorrow.

“Trust me, Betty,” said I; “I am not one to treat with lightness thy duty to thy father; but to

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me 't is clear that thou couldst do no other than thou didst. Let the past be past, and turn thy thoughts to the future! Hast thou any plans?"

"I have a plan, and one I would fain open to thee. Thou hast heard how, when Sir Thomas Dale was here, they builded a guest-house for the sick people, a high seat and wholesome air, and called the place, 'Mount Malado.' Here it still stands and here now abide two Sisters of Mercy, besides the widow of a ship's captain that hath been drowned in the Bay. Hither I am resolved to betake myself for the present at least, that I may try what help lies for my sick heart, in ministering to others."

I shuddered to think of her thus; yet could I not on the moment devise a better scheme.

"But," said I, "what wilt thou do, if thou thyself fall ill, far from all old friends and among strangers thus?"

"I shall not be among strangers. Miles Cary has taken out a land patent covering a hundred acres or more near Rock Hall, Parson Whitaker's old house, fair framed and strongly impaled. So I shall still be near friends, and less in danger of the betrayal of my secret than if I tarried here where there are so many ships coming in from England."

"I think thou art right and I honor thee for a

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brave woman. Yet do I grieve to see thy bravery put to the test. Some day — ”

“ Some day ? ”

“ Nay, I will not be guilty of speaking the weakness that was on my tongue. For a time thou and I must part. Sure, for so short a word, parting is wondrous hard to utter.”

“ When must thou be gone ? ”

“ To-morrow, perchance ; or at latest within three days.”

“ Why, then, this is good-bye ! ”

“ Then do I indeed pray ‘ God be with thee ! ’ ”

“ Ah ! that puts me in mind that I had well nigh forgot to return thy ring, and thou wouldst be thinking me a thief indeed.”

“ Betty, if thou wouldst have me believe in thy friendship, offer not to return the ring, for while thou wearest it, ’t will seem a link binding me to thee. I shall feel, moreover, that it is a talisman to call me to thy side ; for should I ever receive it by the hand of any messenger, ’t will need no word accompanying it to say, ‘ Thy friend hath need of thee.’ ”

“ I would,” said she, “ that it were of less value : yet will I keep it, and thou in turn must take something of me, for who knows but the day may come when thou shalt feel the need of me ? ”

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“The need of thee — Oh, Betty!”

“Ay, thou knowest the lion in the fable owed his life to a mouse.”

While she was speaking she drew the chain from her neck, and unclasped her mother’s picture. “Take it,” she said; “it hath ever been thought to bear a great resemblance to me and there may be times yonder at Flower da Hundred when it will please thee to recall that troublesome Betty Romney.”

Our eyes met, and methinks she saw that in mine which caused her own to droop, for her voice faltered, and then stopped short. I took the little pearl-set picture from her hand, and raised it reverently to my lips before thrusting it into the breast of my jerkin. Then — for the temptation was too mighty for me — I bent over Elizabeth Romney and kissed her, there above the troubled eyebrow, on the white forehead, now flushed rosy red. Yet spake she not a syllable.

“Farewell!” I cried; and without another word I rushed out of the house, my heart beating like a thousand hammers in my breast.



CHAPTER IX.

A PRIVATE QUARREL.

“COME in, can’t ye, without battering my door down !”

At this invitation, which I own was not over-courteous, my door was thrust open, and in walked a young coxcomb in habit singularly combined of the court and the wilderness. He was dressed in the very height of faded finery. If his hat was worn and his plumes draggled, he atoned for both by setting them the more jauntily on the side of his head. The holes in the ends of his gloves he concealed by holding one glove and grasping the hilt of his sword with the other, and the oiled point of his Spanish beard concealed the tatters of his muslin rúff, stiff with saffron starch.

“Good morrow, Master Pierce !” quoth I. “And what, may I ask, hath procured me the honor of a visit from you ? I would have sworn that the

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only hope of seeing you lay in stopping at the ordinary, under the sign of 'The Goat.' "

"I am come," answered he, with the solemnity of extreme youth, "bringing a note from my friend, Captain Spelman, who doth request an immediate reply."

"Very good," said I, "he shall not suffer from the lack of one. Perchance he has fallen a trifle lame this morning, and desires a rubbing with my universal balm liniment. Sit ye down, Master Pierce, on yonder stool, while I run my eye over his symptoms. Belike he hath caught a chill in the night air, for I am told both you and he are o'er given to late hours."

"Read the note, Master Huntoon, and methinks your own teeth will chatter as though (hic) ye had the ague yourself."

"So? It must be a cool epistle indeed, and quite refreshing, I dare be sworn, in this sultry weather. I will lose no time in perusing it."

With this I brake the seal, and unfolding the letter, I found within, as I had expected, — a challenge. The note ran after this fashion : —

MR. HUNTOON, — I wonder ye should so much degenerate from a gentleman as to seek to cast the aspersion of a blackguard upon me in the presence of a ladie and of half the gallants of James Citie. I know

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it to be out of malice and the evil disposition of your hart ; therefore I desire ye, if so be that ye have aught of manhood in ye, that y^e meet me to-morrow morning at six o'clock, at y^e blazed tree, hard by the eastern gate which leadeth out from y^e palsado.

My weapon is Rapier, y^e length of which I send ye by bearer. Yo^r seconde bring with ye, and I will do the like.

Yo^rs not now, but at y^e time appointed,

HENRY SPELMAN.

When I had finished reading this letter, I filed it by spitting it, as it were, on the point of my dagger. Then, drawing my quill pen from its case, I dipped it into the inkhorn and wrote : —

Mr. SPELMAN, — Perchance 'twere looking for too much to expect that one who understands not how to treat ladies, should any better comprehend how to deal with gentlemen. I believe it to be the practice among gentlemen, when sending a challenge, to offer the choice of weapons to their opponent. But I am quite content to waive this courtesie that I may be the less in your debt whatever the issue. I accept the Rapier, and will find a second.

I will meet you at y^e hour and place appointed.

HUMPHREY HUNTOON.

I read my note over carefully and lighted my candle to seal it withal, when a sudden thought came over me. I took up the captain's note once

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more, and perused it from beginning to end ; after which I held both his and mine in the flame till they were consumed to ashes and fell in light gray flakes on the deal table.

“ ’T is not meet,” said I, turning me toward the stool from which Pierce was watching me with round-eyed astonishment, “ that a lady’s name be brought into the matter ; least of all in writing. Say to him that sent thee that I fear him no more armed than unarmed ; that I am glad I did as I did, and would do it again ; and that in spite of the scant courtesy he hath shown me, I do consent to the use of the rapier and will meet him as he desireth at the blazed tree at six in the morning.

“ As for the rapier he hath sent as a measure, let me see — Ay, it matcheth well with mine own in length.”

By the glint of my visitor’s eye, I suspicioned that he was somewhat surprised at my familiarity with the weapon ; but he said nowt and presently withdrew with as much bluster as had accompanied his entrance.

It took me no long time to decide on my second. There was not a man in the colony so good an authority on duelling as John Pory. To him I betook myself.

My heart was beating hard and I felt that my

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affair was the only thing of interest in the wide world. It gave me somewhat of a chill, therefore, to find Pory hard at work on a revision of his "Geographical History of Africa," which had been published in London some years before, and had met with the good fortune to be praised by the great Hakluyt himself.

As I entered, Pory looked up, but was too much absorbed in his own thoughts to note my excitement.

"The Nile," said he, pointing with his finger to the map which he was engaged in drawing, "the Nile, my boy, is the great mystery of the modern world. Here have I traced its course as I believe it to run from some inland lake northward to the sea. Some day, who knows but you and I together may sail our boats up to its hither cataract, and cut our way thro' the jungles above? There were pioneering worth our while!"

"Thanks," said I, "but it looks now as if I were more like to accept a previous invitation to visit 'that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.'"

"How's that?"

"I have been honored with a challenge from —"

"The devil!"

"No, not from the devil, but from his favorite son, Captain Henry Spelman."

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“The insolent beggar! Compliment him not with the title of captain, for the Council hath sentenced him to be stripped thereof. He to challenge thee! I’ll have out a writ commanding the sheriff to seize and apprehend the body of said Spelman, and detain him in safe custody without bail or mainprize.”

“Nonsense! I am not come to appeal to an officer of His Majesty’s province of Virginia, but to ask a favor of mine old friend, John Pory, who in days of yore was counted as good a shot and as steady a hand at the fencing foils as any in England, — that is, when he was sober, as seldom happened. John, will ye be my second? Yea or nay.”

“Faith, ye tempt me sorely. ’Tis not o’er well befitting that an officer of the government do aid and abet the breach of the peace. Yet the quarrel is by rights as much mine as thine, for hadst thou not been ahead of me, I must e’en have chastised him myself.

“He is a strange being, that Spelman, — not a bad nature, methinks, but ungoverned from childhood. He comes of good blood, too, being a son of Sir Henry Spelman of Norfolk.”

“He — a son of Sir Henry Spelman?”

“Why not, since he needs must be son to some man?”

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"But my father knew Sir Henry well, and did esteem him much."

"Well, and pray what of that? 't is not the first time, I trow, that the sons of loving fathers have fallen foul of one another, and cut each other's throats with as much zest as their fathers locked arms withal. But I understand that Sir Henry himself is not on terms with his son, for the captain did tell me of his coming to this country that 't was on account of being in displeasure with his friends.

"I can well believe it, for he hath been ever a firebrand in the colony; yet have I a kind of liking for the animal, — perchance through having been somewhat of a scapegrace myself in my day."

"'T is an ill-chosen time for descanting on his virtues," quoth I, somewhat nettled.

"Nay, nay," cried Pory, stretching out both hands in comic deprecation of my wrath. "I look upon him as practically already dead, since he is to fight with thee, and I was but speaking an apology over his grave. But come, then, what weapons didst thou choose?"

"I had no opportunity to choose. He himself named rapiers."

"Why, that was a gross offence against etiquette, and strange indeed in a man whose father hath written a learned treatise on the code."

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"Ay, so I thought ; but as it happens, I am more at home with rapiers than with other weapons. In sooth I am not in a mood to worry over the issue of the quarrel. For one thing only do I care, — that the lady's name be not mixed up in the matter."

"Why, man, how can it be helped when half the gallants in the town saw the blow? I tell thee the best thing thou canst do is to tie the lady's colors to the hilt of thy rapier ere thou enter the lists. No doubt she would smile on thee."

"Say no more on that subject, Pory, lest I fight thee too!"

Pory looked hard at me with a twinkle in his eye, and then gave vent to a long, low whistle.

"In love!" he chuckled, "as I'm a living sinner! 'T is the tender passion which hath turned thee such poor company of late."

"Jibe on, if thou wilt," cried I, all of a torch, "but spare me from joining in thy mirth."

With this I rose to take leave.

"Beshrew me if I ever smile at thee again," he answered; "but leave me not ere thou hast told me the hour and place of meeting, and what details thou and the captain have left for your seconds to arrange."

"The hour is six in the morning. The place

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the blazed tree near the eastern gate, and for the duties of the seconds, belike thou knowest them better than I, for to tell thee the truth in confidence, 't is my first affair of honor and I am raw at the business."

"I'll risk thee, tho' it be thy first. Remember there are but three things needful in this kind of a fight."

"And, pray, what be they?"

"A quick eye, a firm wrist, and a cool head."

"But how goes it if both antagonists have all three?"

"Why, so far in history, no affair hath e'er turned up where either had them. The only question is whose eye wavers least, whose wrist trembles least, and whose heart chokes him least. Bear in mind that the other man is probably worse affrighted than thou, let thine own heart thump in thy breast as it will!"

I pondered on the advice as I walked homeward, and again when I went to bed, and yet again when I stood under the shadow of the blazed tree in the slant light of the next morning's sun, and each time it gave me fresh courage.

Pory and I were first to reach the spot of this ungentle tryst, but ere long we caught sight of Spelman coming down the path which led from

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the eastern gate-way, arm in arm with Pierce, and bearing himself with jaunty assurance.

"He's cock-a-hoop now," quoth Pory, "but we'll trim his comb for him ere long."

"Gentlemen, are you ready?" queries Pierce.

"Ay, and waiting," answers Pory.

The captain and I took off our hats to each other till the plumes swept the ground.

"Faith, 'tis as pretty a salute as I e'er saw at Hampton Court!" cried Pierce.

"I misdoubt if the jackanapes e'er saw either the one or the other," Pory whispered to me as he helped me to strip to the waist.

With nowt on above the belt but our shirts, and with our sleeves rolled to the elbow, I had the better opportunity to measure mine adversary. I noted his heavily built shoulders, and the muscles on his arm standing out like ropes on a mast, whereas I was but slenderly built, and my height gave but the greater space to be covered by my guard. But to balance this, my training as a chirurgion had made my hand steady, and my adversary had been drinking heavily over-night.

"Gentlemen, stand on your guard!" called Pory, when he and Pierce had placed us so that the sun shone on both alike.

We raised our rapiers and engaged.

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At the first I found myself hard pressed and had difficulty in parrying. The weight of his lunge was more than once like to lay me out, but at the end of two minutes, Spelman's guard began to weaken. He strove to recover himself at octave, engaging my blade and binding it, till he could slip his point past my wrist and plunge it in my side ; but I parried with quinte, and caught his weapon with the edge of mine. He responded to this by a return to guard, his elbow bent and his body held far back, — too far, as the event proved, for seeing mine advantage, I raised my wrist to high carte, and throwing all my force into the thrust, I bore him through the shoulder, and, his balance being weak, he fell to the ground, — his rapier, knocked from his hand, flying off to a distance of two or three paces.

“Now, Captain,” said I, “thou hast had thy satisfaction, and I will have mine.”

“Yea,” quoth he, breathing heavily and faint from loss of blood, “I do acknowledge that my life is justly forfeit.”

“Nay,” I answered, “I have no use for thy life, and mayhap thou hast. Take it therefore ; but two things I do require of thee : first, that thou offer humble and contrite apology to one of whom thou wottest ; and second, that thou do hence-

A Private Quarrel.

forth conduct thyself as beseems the son of that noble gentleman and learned scholar, Sir Henry Spelman."

The mention of his father's name did more than my sword-thrust to unman the captain, who wept like a child the while he promised to do as I commanded.

Fearing lest the loss of blood would cause him to swoon, I pulled out a flask of brandy and poured some down his throat. Then I drew out a roll of bandages which I had prepared for myself in the event of receiving a wound. Aided by Pory and Pierce I propped Spelman against a tree, and having washed the shoulder with water from the river I bound it as deftly as I could. Whilst I worked, I could not but smile to myself, thinking of the trouble it was giving me to undo mine own work.

As we helped Spelman on with his coat, Pory said, "Gentlemen, ye have made a gallant fight. It is finished with satisfaction to the honor of both, and there remains but to shake hands."

I put forth my hand.

Spelman held back for a moment, then he too extended his, saying in right manly fashion, —

"Huntoon, I thank you. From this hour, I will try if 't be too late for Henry Spelman to make a man of himself!"

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So we, who but an hour ago had come forth bent on shedding one another's blood, clasped hands and parted, friends. 'T is a strange world.

As I walked back to the town the sky bent blue above me, the dew lay thick on the curly wreath of the ground-pine at my feet. The oriole and the scarlet tanager shrilled merrily in my ear. "Strange as the world is," thought I, "and oftentimes sad withal, 't is too good to leave ere one's summons comes."



CHAPTER X.

I SET SAIL.

MY setting forth from James City was a strange mixture of gladness and sadness. On that day I donned, for the first time, my new coat, trimmed very elegant with gold lace, and set off with bars on the shoulder. 'Tis wonderful how dress doth raise the heart of a man. I felt within me, from the moment of putting on this uniform of office, a new power to command.

John Pory had decreed that I should leave James City in state, and accordingly he appeared at the hour of my setting out, with a guard of halberdiers before my door. When I came out, mine ears were assailed by the notes of the fife and drum, and to their lively tune we marched to the long wharf where lay the shallop "Red Fox," the same in which we had sailed for Accomac, now decked out with flags and pennons almost past recognition.

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A womanish weakness came over me as I saw the friends waiting round the wharf to bid me good-bye. There were John Twine, and Ralph Hamor, together with Master Maycox and Parson Bucke, each with a hearty handshake and a kindly word of farewell.

Pory would take no denial, but I must carry with me a jug of his oldest and best canary; and with a sly wink, he took me down into the cabin to pledge my health ere we started.

"Huntoon," he said, as we stood together in the tiny cabin, "thou art not in the main a bad fellow, but I must warn thee that thou hast an enemy."

"Not Captain Spelman surely, after our kindly parting!"

"No, methinks you have no warmer friend in the colony than Spelman. Look nearer home!"

"Why, Jack, I must depend on thee to enlighten my dulness of apprehension, for as I cherish no rancor against any man, so I know of none that hath cause of bitterness against me. I grieve only that I have done so little to deserve the esteem and good-will of those that are gathered here to-day to do me honor."

"Ay!" burst out Pory, "there speaks that old enemy of thine, *thyself*, who goes about crying

I Set Sail.

down thy merits and abilities, till 't is almost past the power of thy friends to cry them up again."

I laughed.

"Nay," quoth my mentor, "it is no laughing matter. 'T is all very well to claim that a good wine needs no bush, but I tell thee, the bush is all that this busy world of ours gets time to take note on, and if thou art wise thou wilt not hide thine old canary character under any vile pot-house label.

"Thou art going now among new people, and those that will take thee much at thine own estimate. Thou canst meech thro' life, or lord it as thou wilt. But if thou'lt take the advice of John Pory, thou wilt carry thy head high, and doff thy cap to no man till thou seest whether, let alone, he will not uncover before thee."

"No, no, Jack! 'T is too late for me to put on airs of grandeur. I must needs go my unnoted way; but to the end of the chapter, I shall continue true and thankful friend of thine. It is time to be off. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, lad, and good luck go with ye!"

I could trust myself to say no more, and wringing his hand I hastened out of the cabin.

When we had come on deck once more, and all my chests were stowed safely aboard, I saw with

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some surprise the dapper figure of Tom Pierce, hastening down the path from the palisade to the river's edge. He was leading by the hand the little black boy who had caused such a pothor. I smiled to see the ebony legs and arms against the little white shift which formed his only clothing, and the black pupils of his eyes set in great rings of staring white.

"A word with you in private, Master Huntoon!" said Pierce, with much air of mystery, when he had caught his breath.

We withdrew a pace or two when he continued, —

"Captain Spelman desires his compliments, and begs that ye will accept the gift of this little negar, Cupid, in token of his amity."

I was much embarrassed by the offering, for I had ever found it too hard a matter to control myself, to desire the life-long charge of any other. I opened my lips accordingly to express my regrets that, much as I thanked the captain for the tender, I was unable to accept it, when the black boy, whose eyes were shrewder at reading faces than his ears at catching spoken words, threw himself on his knees at my feet, and fell to kissing my hand.

"Thou seest," quoth Pierce, smiling, "the gift has a mind of its own and will not be refused."

I Set Sail.

"Then," said I, "I will accept it with the same heartiness as 't was offered, and I do send Captain Spelman most cordial thanks and greetings."

"Come, good master!" cried a sailor from below, "we shall lose our favoring breeze an ye make not greater haste."

I turned toward the boat and had just stepped aboard when Miles Cary pressed toward me. The rope was cast off, but he reached across the gap of water a white packet which I seized eagerly. My heart throbbed in my throat as I tore the letter open. It contained but eight words: —

"God be near thee
On land and sea!"

and was signed, "E. R."

The words were scrawled with difficulty, as needs must be when one writes with the left hand, but of all the tokens of good-will which that day brought me, none carried such warmth and cheer to my heart as this.

As the "Red Fox" set her sails and moved slowly up the river, I knew well that from the window of Miles Cary's cottage, friendly eyes were looking out across the water, and a friendly heart was wishing me "Good speed"!

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I remember well the sinking of heart with which I saw the figures on the wharf grow dim and fade away from my vision, and the pang with which I realized that I had let slip the cables which bound me to so many tried and true comrades, and to the woman I loved.



CHAPTER XI.

FLOWER DA HUNDRED.

TO my diffident and downcast heart, the taking up of a new life among utter strangers appeared a terrible hard task. In the matter of this, however, a pleasant surprise awaited me.

No sooner was I come ashore at Flower da Hundred than, in the line of citizens come down to meet me, I recognized one as strangely familiar, tho' I could not for the moment rightly tell where and when I had seen him last.

To him had fallen the honor of carrying the keys of the town-gates; and he now stepped out from the procession and laid them in my hands. As he thus drew near I recognized his white beard, and I knew him for the father of the dumb maid, whom I had seen last aboard the "Margaret and John."

"Why," cried I, "'tis Giles Lucas!"

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"Ay, sir," answered the old man, greatly gratified at my remembrance, "and wondrous glad to meet with thee once more."

"Art thou settled here in Flower da Hundred?"

"I am, sir, with my daughter. I have a grant of a hundred acres of land at Dancing Point, just across the river, and I would fain remove my house thither, but my daughter does be terrible afeard of the savages."

"Little fear of savages in these peaceful days," quoth I; "yet am I glad to find thee housed here, for I have hopes that thou art in want of a lodger, as I ~~of~~ a lodging."

"If my poor house be counted worthy to entertain the Head of the Hundred, I shall be but too much honored," said Lucas, with a bow worthy of a courtier.

Thus it came about that I took up my lodging with these good people, who from that time on seemed to have no thought in life, save how to make me comfortable. Owing to his skill at carpentering, Giles Lucas's house was the most solid and commodious in the settlement. The daughter, going so little abroad, had the more time to devote to keeping home orderly and tidy. She did appear better in mind and body than when I saw her first on shipboard, and her presence seemed to carry

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with it a benediction. As she sat spinning at her flax-wheel I could have fancied a halo around her head like that above the Saints and Martyrs of old, and her lips wore oft a peaceful smile as though friendly spirits were whispering airy secrets in her ear which was more delicately attuned than our rude natures. Her very affliction seemed to lend her a peculiar sacredness, setting her apart from the jarring discords of the world and shutting her in to a peaceful inner realm where reigned an eternal calm.

Her father worshipped her with such an intensity of affection as sometimes led me to wonder if it were right that one life should be so absorbed in another; but 't was clear that he found his happiness in ministering to hers, and she in turn lavished love and gratitude in unstinted measure upon him.

Poor though they were, and exiled from their native land, they needed no pity, for they lived in a spirit of unity which can make a paradise of a desert. This land, however, is very far different to a desert. 'Tis a land of plenty, where any, striving with a will, may find a rich return for his toil. For myself, the thousand crowns which appeared but a pittance in England, was here accounted a handsome competence, and I was thankful enow that I

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neither lived in poverty nor pomp, but in a very good indifferency and to a full content.

I had abode with the Lucases some months, when a young farmer who worked the plantation on Dancing Point, which Giles Lucas owned, came a-wooing to Joan. I doubt not he really was fond of the maid, but more than this 't was his assurance that she would make a good housewife, and a clever dairywoman, which led him to ask her hand of her father.

'T was a curious study to see the mingling of emotions in the old man's mind, what with joy that his daughter should be chosen to wife like other maids, for all her infirmities, and grief at the thought of losing her even partially out of his life. At length he decided in his own mind that it was best for her, and quietly made the sacrifice of his own feelings as of everything else for his maid's sake.

"You see, sir, when I'm gone, she'll have no one to look after her, and she's na' one can fight her own battles in a rough world like this. William Wilkins is not wholly to my liking, but he'll make her a kind man, and he shall have her."

"Hast thou spoken with Joan?"

"Nay, there's no need. From a babe she has known no will but mine."

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“Nevertheless, maids have oft a mind of their own on this subject, be they never so meek on all others, and I counsel thee to ask her ere thou give thy consent to Wilkins.”

“Why, then, I will speak with her; tho’ ’tis a mere form.”

’T was that very evening after tea that Lucas, following mine advice, did by signs and manifold gestures, wherein both he and she are wondrous skilled, communicate to her his plans for the future.

’T was some time ere Joan did comprehend the drift of his meaning; but when she caught it she fell into a very passion of weeping, and would not cease till she had his promise to speak no more on the subject. Even when he had promised, and sat smoothing her hair and speaking soothing words which, God help her, she could not hear, she still clung to him as tho’ some one might tear her away.

I rose silently to get my candle that I might steal away unperceived and leave them together; but as I passed the wooden settle on which they sat, she turned on me such a look of mute and piteous reproach, as made me angry both with myself and her.

“For Heaven’s sake,” quoth I to myself, “why

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have I such an accursed habit of mixing myself up with the concerns of others? Why should Joan Lucas look at me as if 't were I, in place of Wilkins, who was striving to take her away from her father?"

I had little more than reached my chamber when I heard Lucas call me, and running down the ladder which led to my room, I was horror-struck to see Joan sitting rigid on the floor, her back propped against a stool.

Her eyes were set and her countenance fixed in a look of anguish. Her fair hair fell dishevelled around her, and gave a weird expression to the face ordinarily gentle and placid.

As I entered, her look changed from terror to relief, her arm which had been stretched out straight and stiff, fell to her side, and her breathing began to subside from its labored gasps.

"Is she often thus?" I asked of the father, as together we laid her on the canvas-covered bed of straw in her little room. The old man trembled painfully, his head shaking as if he had the palsy. In place of answering my question he only muttered to himself over and over again: "It bodes no good! It bodes no good!"

Seeing that the father stood more in need of my aid than the daughter, who was now sunk in

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quiet slumber, I mixed for him a stiff mugful of *aqua-vitae*, which he drank in long gulps, glancing ever and anon over his shoulder, like one shaken by fear.

"Tell me," said I, slapping him gently on the shoulder to hearten him up, "has your daughter e'er before had such an attack as this?"

"Ay," he answered, speaking like one in a dream.

"When were they, and how fared she in them? Mayhap I may help her if I can learn the story of her affliction."

"Why, sir, —" began the poor old man, and then broke down utterly. Sinking on the stool, he rocked to and fro in his misery, the great tears running down the furrows of his cheeks.

"Come, come, man! Cheer up! Thou must bear a braver heart than this, if but for thy maid's sake."

"For my maid's sake! Oh, good master! We are sore in need of help, she and I; but there's nowt I wud na do for her sake. 'T was for her I left England. An old man does not tear his heart away from his fireside and his porch and the friendly gossip of his neighbors, without a sore struggle; yet have I turned my back on them all and come to die in a strange land, all because I

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loved my maid better than home or friends, or life itself."

"Faith, 't was a strange love that bade thee drag her thus over stormy seas, to a land filled with savages."

I spake roughly, but Lucas was too full of his own grief to heed my tone, though it had been harsh as a rook's, or soft as a cooing dove's.

"Ay," he answered, "'t was hard; but I saw no other way to save her. The neighbors had already begun to whisper dark things about her. One told how she had been seen from her casement, pointing her finger at Dame Derby's babe, which was carried to its grave within a week. My poor lass, that would na hurt a worm, and that cried her eyes out the day our lamb was sent to the butcher, — to think of her casting the evil eye on a baby!

"But folk are cruel, and I tell thee, had we tarried in Ilfracombe another three months, as sure as there's a devil in hell, my daughter had been burned as a witch."

I started.

"Poor lass!" he murmured, looking tenderly upon the motionless figure on the pallet. "She knows nowt of the dark fate hanging over her, and my hope was that in some wild of the West

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we might find a home where she and I might live out our days in peace ; but I fear — I fear ! ”

With this he fell a-trembling once more.

“ Look ye, Giles Lucas,” said I. “ You have done well to tell me this. I will stand your friend against all comers, and do what I can for this poor maid ; but see to it, after this, that ye keep a close tongue in your head, for our settlers are full of strange fancies and superstitions. If they catch but a hint of this business they will be for burning or drowning, or any other swift and easy means of ridding the colony of a witch.

“ There, there ! Don’t tremble so, and look as tho’ the worst were already come ! I say they shall know naught of what hath befallen. Thou and I alone are in the secret and methinks we are both men who can be silent when we will ! ”

Whilst I was speaking, the maiden, as tho’ catching the meaning of my words, opened her eyes and smiled. ’T was the sweetest look I ever saw on earth, something between the smile of an infant and the benediction of an angel.

“ Talk not to me,” said I to myself, “ of that maid and the black mysteries of witchcraft together.”

“ God bless you, sir ! ” quoth the old man, sitting there beside the bed, like Father Time with his

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white beard resting on his doubled fist, "for your kindness to my poor maid, and may He send me the chance to repay you some day!"

Turning to go out, I looked long at the silent figure on the bed and as I looked, I fell a-thinking of the Trojan maid of whom I had read in my boyish days, the maid whose hard fate it was to foretell evil to her kindred and to those around her; always to warn, never to be believed, and finally to perish in the ruin she had predicted.

I shut the door softly.

"Poor thing!" I murmured.



CHAPTER XII.

A CHRISTMAS GIFT.

IT was Christmas day — the first I e'er spent out of England, and indeed it would have been easy to make myself believe that I was in England once more, so like was the day to our Christmas at home. The morning before we had gathered armfuls of the scarlet-berried holly along the wayside, pulled off big boughs of mistletoe, and cut down pine-trees in the forest. These we dragged thro' the gates with difficulty; so great was the spread of their branches, and such their weight that a yoke of oxen must needs be fastened to each.

The little church was decked with ivy and green wreaths dotted with bright holly berries and the houses were gay with candles, when on Christmas eve, beneath the cold December moon, a band of waits sang their carols beneath my window.

As I was returning from the morning service in the chapel, I saw an Indian standing before the

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door of Lucas's cottage. His limbs were cased in leggins of buckskin, fringed along the side; his head was covered with a cap of fur, and his body was likewise kept warm by a skin of fur. In his hand he held a bundle. As he saw me he uttered a cry of joy, and loosening the leathern thongs which bound his bundle, he laid at my feet the skin of an enormous black bear.

It was Oropax. He was come, in fulfilment of his promise, to Jamestown, and finding me gone had followed on to Flower da Hundred.

When he had deposited his burden, he was fain to be gone at once, for he said the king, his father, had been loth to trust him amongst the pale-faces, and he had promised to return within three days.

His discourse was open and friendly; but the savages who accompanied him were surly and full of suspicion. Finding that he would not bide with us, I took him into the house and filled for him a dish of the dinner, which Joan was cooking extra good in honor of the day; I loaded his trencher with hot corn meal and the tender flesh of a sucking pig, and to wash all down I gave him a mug of Pory's old canary wine, which he did mightily relish. When he had eaten and drunken he took his departure, promising to come again in the spring.

A Christmas Gift.

"'T will make a famous cushion for thy study chair," quoth Lucas, when he saw it. I shook my head, smiling.

"Wilt thou, then, have it for a rug on thy floor? I did not think thou didst care for such luxuries."

"Nay, Lucas," said I, "I intend not to keep it for myself at all, but to send it to a friend of mine at Mount Malado."

"If thou hast a sick friend, why dost not bring him here to be nursed?" he asked.

"Nay, thou art mistook. My friend is not sick, but a nurse in the hospital," I said.

"Why, they have only women," he began, then paused, and studied me curiously.

I carried the rug to my room and looked at it with satisfaction. I could fancy the pale, pure profile standing out against its blackness, and the delicate white fingers buried in its long, thick fur. When I had rolled it up and secured it once more with the leathern thongs which had bound it on its journey from Accomac, I sat down at my table, drew forth my pen and inkhorn, and wrote:—

FLOWER DA HUNDRED,
XMAS DAY, 1620.

DEAR SISTER ELIZABETH,— For so they tell me thou art called yonder at *Mount Malado*, thinkest thou not 't is somewhat hard that 't is from others only that I

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have thus far learned of thy welfare? To me it seemeth so, but Christmas day is the season for forgiveness, and I do extend thee full and free pardon for this thy sin.

Perchance thou dost remember how one night in James City, the last before we parted, thou didst flout me with having forgotten my promise anent a certain bear-skin. "Men" (these were thy words) "will swear us mighty oaths, but in their fulfilment are they wondrous modified."

Now it is my design to heap coals of fire on thy head by sending thee the very bear-skin for which I did agree there in Accomac, looking to the fulfilment of that promise made thee. To-day, young Oropax, the son of the king, to whom I did some trifling service, appeared in Flower da Hundred with this skin, the largest, I verily believe, in Virginia. I trust thou wilt use it for the back of thy chair, which, if I recall aright, was thy part of the compact.

I know not if thou hast enough interest in an old friend to care to hear of his life, yet will I set thee an example, for I am longing daily to hear thus of thee. In the morning I say, "Now Mistress Betty will be at breakfast;" and at noon, "Now she perchance is preparing some dainty dish for her sick patients;" and straightway I fall a-wishing for an attack of sickness which shall send me to *Mount Malado*, but 't would be hard indeed for a man to sicken with such care as I have here.

Thou must know that I have fallen in with an old man named Lucas, who hath a dumb daughter. They seemed from the first like old acquaintance, since they came over with me in the "Margaret and John," and

A Christmas Gift.

't is they who have taken me in and made me at home.

I would that thou couldst see Joan Lucas. She is not accounted beautiful; but to me her soft grey eyes are full of a pathetic charm, and her fair hair lies like a halo round her face. I have learned to talk with her by signs, and I find her mind as clear in intelligence as any that have the use of both tongue and ears.

She sits ever with her spinning-wheel close by the window, and as I draw near the door at even and see her smile of welcome, truly she seemeth to me like some guardian spirit set to care for my welfare.

I would thou couldst have such an one yonder at *Mount Malado*. Hast thou thine old headlong habits? If so, I wonder they do trust thee with the mixing of drugs. Prithee write me just what thou dost, and when thou art about it, that I may pin it up as the Papists pin up their hours for nones and vespers, and I will learn it by heart for my Saints' Calendar.

Thy faithful friend, and most devoted servant,

HUMPHREY HUNTOON.

I read over my letter, well pleased to find naught therein which could offend Mistress Betty, or lead her to think that under guise of a Christmas gift I sought to play the lover against her will. When I had sealed it with red wax, I sent for Cupid, and bade him carry both letter and bundle to Mount Malado, and I particularly charged him to wait for a letter to be returned. He was to take the skiff;

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and, departing as he did on a Monday, I reckoned that he should be back on Wednesday.

To my eagerness even two days looked a long time, but I whiled away the hours by fancying the kind words which should greet my eye, the hint of perfume on the paper, and the joy lying in the very sight of the hand-writing which so far was only connected for me with the cruel note I had carried so long. I resolved that I would destroy that as the old year died, and would carry in its place the new letter, if it should prove kind, and such an one as could be worn as an amulet folded about the picture which I bore ever on my breast.

The sun was drawing towards setting on Wednesday eve when Cupid found his way to the room where I was sitting alone.

"Quick!" I cried, holding out my hand, "the letter!"

"No letter, Mars Humphrey," says he.

At first I fancied that he had lost the letter by the way, and feared to confess it; but when I questioned him the whole story came out. He had come safely and without adventure to Mount Malado, and been admitted to the presence of a "boo-ful lady" whom they called Sister Elizabeth. When he laid the skin at her feet and told her 't was from me, she smiled and wept, and when he handed her

A Christmas Gift.

the letter she looked at it "her eyes all shining," but as she read on, she grew angry, and stamped with her foot on the ground.

"Tell your master," said she, "that I thank him for the bear-skin, which is of a rare size and handsomeness. Tell him, too, that I am glad he hath found such good friends in Flower da Hundred, and say that I do earnestly counsel him to take a dumb wife, that he may talk all he will without contradiction."

Cupid, whom I have encouraged to prattle o'er familiarly with me, did venture on a grin as he uttered the message; which he did swiftly repent, for I shook him till his teeth chattered.

"Rascal!" cried I, "'t is an impudent falsehood of thine own invention."

The poor black boy, fearing, I suppose, that I was about to beat him, fell on his knees and entreated me to believe him, for he spoke but the truth, and the lady had made him repeat the message twice that he might learn it pat.

It was clear to me that 't was the truth he spake, and indeed as I pondered on the language, I saw clearly that 't was none of his. There was no just cause for surprise, I said to myself, bitterly; 't was just such a message as might have been expected of the writer of that first letter. This was the real

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Betty Romney. The other — the brilliant, tender thing of April smiles and tears — was but the creation of mine own fancy, which had conjured up a beautiful soul where nature had made only the body fair.

“I would have forgiven her aught else,” said I to myself, “if only she had spared Joan Lucas.”



CHAPTER XIII.

A VISIT TO MY NEIGHBORS.

IT was a joyful day for me when John Pory came to Flower da Hundred to pay me a visit, the first in two years. The bright October air lay soft and hazy on the horizon, but clear overhead. It was hunter's weather. Many a night under the moon we treed the wily opossum; or by day, with dogs and servants, tracked the fox and the wolf through the crackling underbrush, or, hiding in the deep river grasses, shot the wild duck on the wing.

'T was a visit of business as well as pleasure, however. Pory brought to me a bundle of papers from the governor, and bore also messages for a certain Master Jordon, who had builded a stout palisado between Flower da Hundred and Martins-Brandon. Within this wall of wood he had raised a fine house, and within the house he had a pretty wife, — one (so rumor said) whom marriage had not

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cured of the habit of making eyes at every man she met.

Pory requested that I should bear him company to this place, which the owner thereof hath christened "Jordon's Journey;" and so it fell out that one day when the sun was dancing on the yellow river, we dropped down the stream in a cockle-shell skiff rowed by Cupid, since the wind was too light to fill the sail.

When we arrived at the little wharf which runs out into the river from Master Jordon's plantation, we found by the shore an Indian servant, who ran on ahead to the house to herald our approach.

The master of the house was gone on horseback to look after his tobacco-fields; but his wife, Mistress Cicely Jordon, made us welcome, and me-thought wasted no regrets on her husband's absence. She and Pory fell at once into jesting talk, whilst I amused myself in looking over the books, heavy folios and stout, leather-bound duodecimos, which were piled one on top of other, as is the wont of a man who useth them but little.

Taking up one of the volumes, I brushed away the dust with my glove before opening.

"Look!" cried Mrs. Cicely, laughing, yet a trifle vexed withal; "is he not rude to be calling attention thus to my bad housekeeping?"

A Visit to My Neighbors.

"Nevertheless I shall insist on showing you over our new house, tho' 't will make my husband vexed that he was not here to do 't himself."

"'T were worth crossing Jordan to enter Paradise," exclaimed Pory, bowing low, "especially if one be conducted by an angel!"

"O law, Mr. Pory!" quoth Mrs. Cicely, with a giggle; "I've not heard such talk since I came over."

"Then you should have tarried at Jamestown, where the gallants know how to appreciate female loveliness," says Master John, as bold as brass.

"Perhaps," said I, coughing, "'t is not that our eyes are poorer, but our discretion greater, further up the river."

My suggestion was the sooner heeded that just at the moment the sound of horses' hoofs was heard without, and an instant later the master of the house entered, — a loud-voiced, red-faced English squire, who bade us make ourselves at home, which we soon found to mean making free with the brandy and aqua-vitæ.

"What luxury is this, Master Jordon!" cried I, as he opened a heavily panelled door.

"A dining-room separate from the kitchen! Why, the next step will be a ball-room and a banqueting-hall."

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"In truth it may well be that my children's children shall see such grandeur. Things are moving rapidly here in Virginia."

"Ay, verily," adds Pory; "every ship that sails the sea now-a-days comes over loaded with Delft ware or pewter services; and even silver spoons may be seen on the tables at James City, where they strike such envy to the hearts of them that own them not, as hath tempted the Council to put them under the ban of the sumptuary laws."

"Why, Cis!" cried Master Jordon, "he must have caught sight of thy new chest. Have out thy best for dinner! We will be ready for it anon, when we have visited the smoke-house and the wind-mill."

"Thanks, good Master Jordon," said I, "but methinks we were best not to tarry for dinner, but to hoist sail for home when Secretary Pory hath delivered to thee the messages he bringeth from the governor."

"Not stay for dinner! Tut, tut, man! Offer not such an insult to a Virginia planter as to talk of leaving his house without breaking bread with him!"

Thus pressed, we tarried for dinner, and sat us down to a feast of hung beef and hominy with boiled potatoes (a great luxury), and a delicious

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dish made by the Indian servant, Chantro. 'T was compounded of maize mixed with beans, and cooked with butter and milk, slightly salted. This dainty was served in Delft saucers, and we ate it with Mistress Jordon's new silver spoons.

When dinner was ended, Chantro, the Indian lad, aided by my negro boy, Cupid, brought in some tobacco in a lily pot, otherwise a jar of white earth. Master Jordon lighted Pory's pipe with a coal of fire held in the clutches of a tiny pair of silver tongs, brought over, as I suspicioned, along with the spoons in the last packet. For my own light I preferred the fresh stick of fragrant juniper which Cupid held to my tobacco.

Mistress Cicely, so far from finding the smoke unpleasant, sat herself down close at my side upon a stiff straight-backed chair of black oak, which would, doubtless, have been uncomfortable had she not been sustained by the thought that her fluffy golden hair and pink and white skin looked wondrous well against that dark setting.

She sat a moment running her fingers through her light love-locks, playing with her rings, and settling her farthingale, while I sought vainly for a theme whereon to converse. 'T was as if a bear were seeking some interest in common with a butterfly.

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At length she relieved me of my embarrassment by beginning herself : “ Didst ever visit Mount Malado ? ”

I started, as a bear might start when a butterfly lights upon an open wound.

“ Nay, I have ne’er visited it, tho’ ’t is not far, as thou knowest, from Flower da Hundred. Dost thou know the place ? ”

“ Ay, I was there but last week.”

“ Pray how did that befall ? ”

“ Why, now thou art waking up. Thine eyes have been half asleep till now. Well, I will tell thee of my visit, and I can assure thee the spot is well worth a day’s journey, for, an it be not itself an Eden, it holds the fairest Eve in Virginia.”

“ Go on, I prithee ! ”

“ I am going on, but my discourse is ever a rambling path and must be permitted its digressions. I went to Mount Malado to visit a young man. There, don’t flush up and look so absurdly jealous ! What is it to thee ? Besides, he was my cousin.”

“ And how old did you say he was ? ”

“ I said naught of his age, but ’t is the properest to make an interesting man, — about like thine, I should say. But to relieve thy feverish impatience I will acquit myself at once of all sentiment, by

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telling thee that he is sunk fathoms deep in love with another."

"No!"

"Ay, with an angel, a vision from heaven, as he thinks, who, for the short time she is allowed to walk the earth, doth spend her life in the holy duties of caring for the sick and goeth by the name of 'Sister Elizabeth.'"

"And didst thou see this paragon when thou didst visit Mount Malado?"

"Nay, jest not at her perfections. I own I do not as an ordinary thing care for women. Methinks they comprehend not my nature so well as men, but I confess that when I had seen this 'Sister Elizabeth,' my heart was as far gone as Cousin Will's."

"Canst thou describe her?"

"Oh, ay, I could rave all day of her beauty, but belike I could not make you see it. You dark men are ever so crazed over flaxen hair and red and white skin, like — like mine, for instance."

"Mock not at my susceptibility; but try if thy lively wit can paint this angel of thine before my vision! See, I will sit with mine eyes closed thus, while thou dost conjure her up before my fancy."

"Why, then thou canst not see *me*!"

"Ay, precisely! 't was my intent to shut out that

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too distracting vision, to give room for the entrance of another."

"Prettily spoken, and thou shalt have thy reward! Listen, then, and conjure up, if thou canst, a form straight and lissome as a lily stalk, holding itself with pride, yet not with haughtiness."

"Faith, ye are the princess of narrators. I could listen to thee forever."

"Oh, but her face! You should look on that! The skin is creamy white and the nostrils delicately cut, but you note them not; nor nothing else, but only the sweetness of the mournful eyes, which droop a little at the corner as in sadness, yet can flash into laughter at a word, as the dark brook sparkles into merry ripples if a stone be cast therein."

"Nay," said I, "'t is not the eyes at all that give that troubled look, but the waving line of the pencilled eyebrow."

"How now, traitor! Hast thou seen her?"

"I? Oh, no — that is — I — what a strange fancy! When thou hast reached my years, Mistress Cicely, thou wilt find all the world cut up into types, and when one describes so vividly as thou the dullest mind supplies the missing details and fills up the picture. But what of Cousin Will? Is he still at Mount Malado?"

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"Bless thee! no: he is up and away; off again on his ship. I trust he carried with him some hope of winning the maid, for I ne'er saw man worse love-struck. Methinks it argueth something for him that she hath promised to pay us a visit, here at Jordon's Journey, in March. Perchance I would invite thee at the same time, were it not for the fear of injuring Will's chances; for at the risk of making thee vain for life, I will own that thou art the handsomer of the two; though Will was ever counted the properest man in Dorsetshire."

I let the woman babble on. In sooth, mine ears might as well have been stopped with flax, so swathed was I in mine own thoughts. I but answered "Ay" and "No" at the pauses in her discourse, which she did most truly describe when she called it a rambling path.

Meanwhile the talk of the others had drifted on to public affairs.

"Has any ship from home come in of late?" I heard Master Jordon ask of Pory when I wakened from my trance of forgetfulness.

"Ay, 'The Bona Nuova.' She came in a sen-night since, come Tuesday, and is still breaking bulk at James City."

"And what news doth she bring from London? As good I trust as her name should indicate."

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“ Why, like many other things in this world, ’t is mixed good and evil. First, good, for that as thou hast mayhap heard, the experiment of the twenty maids in coming out to seek husbands here two years since, is proved such a success that Sir Edwin Sandys hath planned to send out ninety young women pure and uncorrupt, enough to make wives for half the planters on the shores of the river. They are even now on their way, so it seems.”

“ Ay, that is good news indeed, homes and families are all our settlers need to make them good and stable citizens. But what is the evil tidings, which, as thou sayest, doth mix with the joyfulness of this? Is aught wrong at home?”

“ Why, so far as I can learn from talking with the captain and from the letters he hath brought the governor, public affairs are in a tangle, which threatens to snarl worse and worse.”

“ ’Sdeath! and how’s that? Is the Spanish marriage still on?”

“ Ay, and talk of Prince Charlie going over to Spain in body, and to Rome in soul.”

“ But the Commons — will they consent?”

“ Ay, there’s the rub! What’s to happen when the king will and the Commons won’t?”

“ Gossip says that one of the leaders of the

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House, being closeted with the king, ventured to remark: 'We feel sure that your Majesty doth intend to govern us according to the common will.'

"'Say not so!' cried the king, in a towering rage, 'I intend to govern according to the common weal; but never according to the common *will*.'"

"Then," exclaimed Jordon, impetuously, "all I have to say is, let him not in that spirit meddle too far with the Virginia House of Burgesses!"

"Ay," quoth I, "the rope of loyalty, stretched three thousand miles, must needs be wetted with good-will; else 't will snap some day."

At these words, Pory jumped up from his chair and began to shake himself at such a rate I thought a hot coal had fallen on his breeches, but when we questioned him he said:—

"Nay, I am but striving to shake off the smell of treason from my garments. I call upon you all to witness that *I* made no such strictures on his Majesty. If he doth abbreviate the privileges of Parliament, why, 'tis not the first time nice customs have courtesied to great kings."

"Pory," quoth I, quickly, a little afraid lest our host might take him seriously, "thou art drunk on Shakespeare. Canst thou not utter two words without lugging in a quotation by the ears?"

"And why not? I hold that to use thine own

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words when another's do better fit the thought is to send it forth clad in fustian when it might be clad in cloth of gold."

"Ay, but fustian doth best beseem a peasant, and for thy thoughts a garment of thine own language doth appear more equal."

"Nay, nay, look not so fearfully, Master Jordon, we are not at sword's points; but only using the old friend's privilege of free speech."

"Pory, the dial yonder says four o' the clock, and warns us that we must be on our way."

Master Jordon would fain have pressed us to stay the night; but I could not, for that I must needs be at Flower da Hundred to receive the keys of the town's gates at sunset, in the king's name.

As we walked down to the wharf, Pory fell behind with Mistress Cicely, and I heard them quarrelling over a knot of ribbon which had fallen from her hair, and which he, picking up, had refused to return.

To divert Jordon's attention from Pory's indiscretion, for which I resolved to rate him roundly on our return home, I began to talk of the Indian servant who was helping Cupid to set the sail.

"He seems a likely lad," said I.

"Oh, ay, we could scarce live without Chantro. He takes my gun in the morning and brings in

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meat and game enough for the dinner, which he doth then proceed to prepare and serve. He is cook, butler, game-keeper and watch-dog, all in one."

"Yet trust him not too far! Indian blood will betray new friends to old if ever a conflict comes."

"Mayhap, yet suspicion hath poisoned dogs that, trusted, had perchance saved a life."

"'T is an honest saying — give me thine hand," quoth I, heartily; and Pory coming up with us, he and I leaped aboard the skiff.

"A simple, loyal nature that!" said I when we were well out upon the river.

"Yea, and safer in the hands of his Indian than of his wife."

"From such as you, I can well believe it," I answered, smiling.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE MUTTERING OF THE STORM.

I OFT repeated to myself these words Master Jordon spake to me at parting, —

“Suspicion hath poisoned dogs that, trusted, had perchance saved a life.”

I resolved, so far as in me lay, to put aside the suspicion which is ingrained in my nature, woven in its tissue like warp and woof. I could never, as some men do, throw myself with heartiness into the arms of new acquaintances. My feet walk slowly in the paths of friendship, but so far they have never taken a backward step.

’T was with me also in public as in private. I could never hope to win the applause which threw up its hat for Pory wherever he appeared, and which he did ever most richly deserve. He was able to carry at a dash the sympathy of the people, while I must needs sit down in tedious siege of their judgment.

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These reflections were borne in on me in particular one day, after a talk I had held with a certain Master George Thorp, who had a plantation a little further down the river. He was a very worthy and religious gentleman, but his piety did, in my estimation, lead his reason by the nose. He had the welfare of the Indians so much at heart that he gave little thought to the safety of his own people. Indeed he was wont to enjoin upon them the Scripture doctrine of turning the cheek to the smiter, which, as we all know, is a rule for angels when their wings are grown, and not for poor sinners who must stumble along on their own legs through an unfriendly world.

"Is it true, Master Thorp, as I have heard," quoth I, "that ye have of late had all thy mastiffs killed because the naturals do fear them?"

"Yea," said he, "'t is the living truth."

"And is it true also thou hast built for that marauding king of the Werrascos, a fair English house wherein he delighteth himself, running up and down the stair, and turning the key in the lock, forty times a day?"

"Ay, and why not?"

"Why not, in sooth? Because thou art putting a premium on the plundering of thy neighbors, and later perchance of thyself."

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“And pray, dost thou not believe in the golden rule?”

“Verily, I do,” quoth I, “but ’t is a poor rule, leaden or golden, which worketh not both ways alike. Besides, you who cling so close to the Bible should bethink thyself how the law came before the gospel, and ask thyself in all seriousness if these savages were not well kept for a while yet under the wholesome discipline of fear.”

But he would not hearken to me and stoutly maintained that the white men must treat the reds as they would themselves be treated, let the issue be what it might. Perchance it argueth that I am but a heathen myself, but things look not so to me. I am deeply convinced that having planted a colony here in the wilderness, it is our solemn duty so to protect and fortify it as shall strike an awe into the hearts of these savages, who, after all, are but half-tamed beasts of the forest, like at any time to turn and bite the hand they have been licking.

Thus I argued, and thus I acted, despite the smiles of some at my caution and the sneers of others at my cowardice.

“We shall see!” I said calmly to each in turn. “I mean not, if I can help it, to be caught tripping like mine uncle, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, because in

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peace I neglected the discipline which is the best preparation for war."

Every day, accordingly, I ordered out all the men capable of bearing arms and put them through a drill. Sometimes in the middle of the night would I cause the alarm to be sounded, when, not without some grumbling, the citizens would turn out in the square, and take up the position assigned to each in event of an actual attack by the Indians.

I was the more settled in this course of action when, one day early in March, a trader came into the settlement with news which seemed to mine ears not a little alarming. From this man's story it appeared that there was an Indian called by his own people Nemattanow, but by the English nicknamed Jack o' the Feather, because he was wont to wear so many quills for his adornment.

"This Indian," said the trader, "went one day to one Morgan his house and persuaded him to go over to Pamauke to truck. The unlucky Morgan went and was never seen alive again. Three days after their setting forth together, Nemattanow returned alone to Morgan's plantation, where he found two youths who had been the planter's servants. They asked straightway what was become of their master. Jack o' the Feather replied very innocent that he was dead.

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“Then said one of the youths, ‘’T is thou that hast slain him and hast insolently set his cap on thine own head.’

“‘Yea,’ said the other, ‘and we will have thee up for judgment before Master Thorp.’

“At this they would have bound him, to carry him with them to their canoe, but he, the more emboldened that he believed himself immortal, did struggle with them, and had gone near to draw his knife, when the elder of the two youths fired his piece at him, and struck him, so that he sank upon the ground.

“Thinking him but slightly wounded, they placed him in the boat and set out for Master Thorp’s plantation; but by the way, Jack, finding the pangs of death upon him, desired of the boys two things. The one was that they would not make it known that he was slain with a bullet, he that had been honored by all his tribe as immortal; and the other was that he might be buried at James City among the English.”

The folk at Flower da Hundred were inclined to make a great rejoicing over the death of this pestilent savage, who had been greatly feared among the settlers for his insolence and thieving habits; but I felt no such lightness of spirits, for I feared me the slaying of Nemattanow would rouse the

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great Chief Opechancano, brother of Powhatan, to revenge, — that we had but slain the sparrow to stir up the eagle.

My fears were somewhat allayed a few days later, when Pory appeared at Flower da Hundred on his return from an embassy sent by his Excellency the governor to the old Indian chief. He reported that Opechancano had received him with friendliness and sworn an oath with his hand on a brand new Bible, that he would not cherish anger against the white men for the red man's death.

“ 'T is well,” said I, “yet do not put too much faith in Indian oaths.”

Pory's coming brought me great joy, for beside the pleasure of seeing him once more, he had brought along with him, as part of his escort, two old friends. One of them was an old enemy too, even Captain Spelman, now grown to be a prosperous planter, a prop of the colony, and a stanch supporter of mine own.

“ 'T was the laying out by thee,” he said to me, “which set me on my feet ; and to thee more than to any other man on earth, do I owe gratitude and such service as in me lieth.”

Right cordial welcome did I hold out to him, and still heartier to his companion, who was none other than that valiant old sea-dog, Anthony Chester.

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The two years which had passed since we parted had left few traces of age upon him, save that his hair was white, and the skin against it, by contrast, browner; but his heart beat as warm and true as ever, and his hand clasped mine with such an honest grip, as made me wince with pain at the pressure. He was one —

“ Whose even thread of life was woven round and full,
As if Fate spun it of her choicest, whitest wool.”

Among the most treasured memories of my life, is the thought of those peaceful, pleasant hours with him in those few days. He seemed to live over his whole life, in calling up for me the stories of his adventures by sea and land. Of the confidence he had made me that night on shipboard he never spake word till the evening before he was to leave for James City.

We were sitting late, he and I alone together, and betwixt us a noggin of toddy such as ever openeth the heart and mouth of a man. I plunged the loggerhead deep into the bed of glowing embers and then, when it was at white heat, dipped it into the beverage, which greeted its plunge with a kiss of welcome and a bubbling of creamy white foam. The captain drank his mug off at a draught, but the heat thereof was too great for my throat and

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I was fain to sip it while Chester sat watching me in silence.

“Humphrey,” said he, “’t is a strange chance that bringeth us together again, that maid and me and Giles Lucas, and under his roof, too.”

Ere I could speak, he went on : —

“I have had of late a blessed sense of peace and pardon, as tho’ my transgression had been blotted out. The punishment may fall, that were but justice; yet I feel as though all were somehow set right between my soul and the spirit of that dead woman, and ’t is all I ask.”

We sat in silence, for I knew not what to say; and indeed speech seemed but an impertinence to such a mood as his, which was but a sort of communing aloud with himself. So we sat still, watching the falling of the embers from the dying fire.

At length he rose to go to bed, but ere lighting his candle, he stood a moment behind me, laying both hands on my shoulders.

“Humphrey, have things come right betwixt thee and Elizabeth Romney?” he said, in his deep, kind voice.

I shook my head, for I could not trust my voice to answer.

“Nay, look not so despairing! All shall yet be

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well with thee in God's own good time. Good-night and God bless thee, dear lad ! ”

So tenderly he said it that I felt the hot tears in mine eyes, and being ashamed of them I bowed my head upon my arms on the table. Thus I sat, while I heard his footsteps on the stair and listened to the sharp closing of the chamber door behind him.

Then I lifted my head and said aloud :—

“ Good-night, old friend ! ”



CHAPTER XV.

THE STORM BREAKS.

IT was a wild March night.

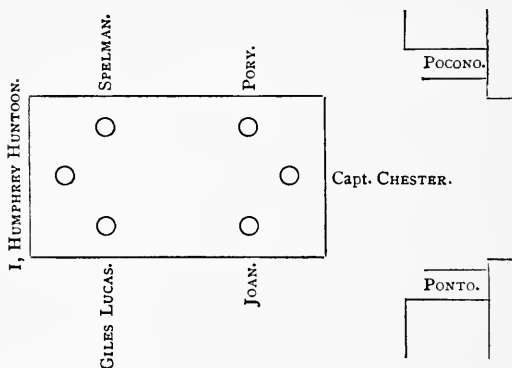
The wind howled and moaned and ever and anon rose to a piercing wail, which brought me more than once to the window to make sure that no one was crying outside the casement. I was glad when morning broke, and gladder still when I entered the kitchen, and saw a high fire blazing on the cheerful hearth.

The table was already prepared for breakfast, and the good folk waited but for me. The board was set out with noggins and trenchers of wood, with a few pewter spoons glittering bright in the fire-light. The fare too, was as simple as the setting, yet both were cleanly and wholesome, and 't was a cheery party that gathered round the table, with much talk and laughter and clatter of knives and spoons.

That those things which happened after may be

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the better understood, I have set forth in a diagram the order in which we sat ; as thus : —



I remember me that at the head of the board where I sat was a mighty haunch of venison — I could ne'er abide the smell o' the meat since. As we were sitting down, two Indians with strings of wild duck over their shoulders, tomahawks and knives in their belts, and long pieces in their hands, slipped in and took the warm seats on the settles at either side of the fire.

The mastiff rose and howled in their faces.

“Down, King!” I cried; “make not such a commotion! 'Tis but Ponto and Pocono, who have

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come in fifty times ere now for a hot bite of a cold morning. Down, I say!"

The dog seemed but half satisfied, and lay down growling under his breath as 't were, his nose between his paws and his eyes fixed on the intruders. Pory handed the new-comers some hot corn-bread, which they took and held in their hands as if to warm them, but they tasted it not.

"Captain Chester," said I, as I plunged my knife into the meat, "dost thou remember what day this is?"

Ay," he answered, "that I do. 'T is the twenty-second of March, the anniversary of the day we met the Spanish caravel off the Isle of Domenica. Faith, 't was the narrowest squeak e'er the 'Margaret and John' had for her life."

"I believe it well, for sure ne'er did any one of us stand in such deadly peril, nor for that matter are like to again; but, thanks to God, and to thy skill and bravery we came safely out."

"Yea," said the captain, solemn and slow, "by the mercy of the Most High we are come so far."

While the words were on his lips, my attention was suddenly called to the maid, Joan. I saw her features begin to twitch strangely. Her lips grew tense and drawn, the foam gathered at the mouth, round which was a streak of livid purple. Her

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eyes seemed starting from her head with that old look of terror which I remembered in the little bedroom."

We all gazed on her spellbound. Slowly, slowly she twisted herself about till she was directly fronting Pocono, when, extending her rigid arm, she pointed her thin, white finger full in his face.

Oh, the horror of that moment! 'Twas as if these savages, brute beasts as they were, saw the angel of doom pointing its fateful finger toward them.

Pocono sat motionless for a second, held like a stone image by that awful glance; but Ponto, springing from his seat with a blood-curdling yell, raised his tomahawk and buried its blade in the brain of the poor maiden.

At the same instant, Pocono, awakened from his trance, struck his knife, deep, deep into the heart of Anthony Chester, who, without a groan, fell heavily to the floor in a pool of blood. Thus perished by the hand of a treacherous savage that gallant sailor who had braved storms and gales and equal foes. He died, — died, as he had predicted, by the same blow that felled Joan Lucas. But he did not die unavenged. Pory's blade flashed in air, and when it came down another corpse lay in these bloody shambles.

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I was making towards Ponto, who was levelling his musket at me, but Giles Lucas and King, the mastiff, leaped upon him at the same instant. "Leave him to me!" shouted Lucas. "God grant me at least my vengeance!"

I saw that he stood in no need of my assistance, and on the moment an instinct told me that this was no private murder, but a plot, a conspiracy.

"To the gates, to the gates!" I cried, rushing into the street, followed by Pory and Spelman.

The first man I met, fortunately, was Ensign Rosingham.

"Have out the drummers instantly!" I shouted. "Sound the alarm! The Indians are upon us!"

In less time than it takes to tell, the call to arms sounded out and Flower da Hundred awoke to its peril.

As the settlers sprang out fully armed from every doorway, and gathered swiftly in the centre of the town, I saw with grim satisfaction that my caution was justified of itself. It was no mob I had to deal with, but an army, in which every man knew his post. They marched away by twos and threes, some to the gates, some to the guns. All was in order to meet the attack, let it come when it might.

To Pory I gave command of the little force at the West gate, where the heaviest onslaught might

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be expected. Spelman I set to oversee the ordinance. Then I started on a journey of inspection round the palisade, for I realized that a single weak spot in the joining of the logs might be the ruin of us all.

As I reached the Eastern gate, the one which opens toward the river path, the man at the peep-hole called to me, —

“An Indian is creeping up thro’ the underbrush, and making strange signs, as though he seeks a parley.”

Apprehending that this was but another move in the dastardly game of the naturals, I applied mine own eye to the hole. Lying flat on his belly in the low bushes, not ten paces from the gate, I saw with amazement the figure of Chantro, my neighbor Jordon’s servant.

“So this,” thought I, “is the end of my friend’s trustfulness, that he and his lie there at Jordon’s Journey weltering in their blood like Chester and the poor maid yonder, and now he has come to trap us if he can.

“Halt,” I cried; “another step and thou art a dead man!”

“Hush! Speak low!” answered the Indian’s voice from the thicket. “Master Jordon and his women in the woods, and pray, ‘Open the gate!’”

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"Liar," I groaned, "thou hast slain them and now dost seek, under cover of their names, to open the gate to thy fellow-scoundrels."

The stolid face of the savage showed no resentment at my words.

"Is Master Huntoon there?" he asked, in the same low, harsh guttural.

"Ay, your braves have not slain him as ye planned."

"Him pick up Chantro's arrow!"

With these words the Indian drew his bow and shot an arrow high into the air. It fell just inside the walls of the palisade, almost at my feet.

I stooped and picked it up. 'Twas heavy. Something was tied to it. God! 'twas my ring!

"Wait for me, I am coming with thee!" I called.

"No, no! Kill every one by that," answered Chantro.

"Then," cried I, "fly, swift as the wind, still as death! Every moment is precious. We will open just as you reach the gate!"

The Indian was gone; wriggling his way like a snake through the shrubbery as no white man could ever do. My heart in my mouth, I stood there watching for his reappearing. One minute passed — two — three — Would he never come?

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At length, at a point some distance from that where he had first appeared, I noticed a little stirring of the underbrush. It was they. They had crept up as far as they could under cover. Now for the dash across the open !

The distance was but a hundred yards, and they were fleet of foot and sped by terror, but to me it seemed as though they were shod with lead. Half the distance was covered. They were safe — no, they had been seen, and a shower of arrows fell around them, while behind them rose that blood-curdling, paralyzing yell. Who shall describe it to ears that have never caught the terror of that sound ?

I felt my limbs palsied and ready to sink, but mine eyes were glued to the hole beside the gate and my hand was on the bolt ready to draw. I counted the flying band. They numbered but four . Mistress Jordon half-dragged along by her husband, and in advance, holding close to Chantro and keeping pace with his flying-footsteps, the lithe, light form of Elizabeth Romney. Jordon stumbled over a rock in the path and slipped. Alas for him and his charge had he not recovered himself as he did by a mighty effort. On they came, steadily. Thank Heaven ! none were left on that fatal field. All, *all* were saved ; if indeed it

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were being saved to share our peril. While I was thinking this an Indian dashed out from the thicket at one side and raising his tomahawk, swung it, gleaming round his head, taking aim full at Elizabeth Romney. I hesitated the fraction of a second, for it is a last resort to fire at flying figures, but dangerous as it was, it must be chosen. I fired, and the savage fell dead upon the ground. The great gate swung open as the refugees reached it, then slammed to behind them with a great clang. As the heavy bolt fell into place, we gave one mighty cheer; but there was scant time for greeting or for rejoicing.

"Jordon," cried I, "when thou hast thy breath, do thou keep this gate, and open not to any man living without my orders. Send the women to Master Jefferson's house. 'Tis the strongest barricaded, and the safest!"

From the ground whereon she had sunk exhausted from her desperate flight, Elizabeth Romney rose then and faced me. In her eyes was the fire of a fighting race. She wasted words neither in argument nor entreaty, but said simply: "Give me a gun!"

It was her hour of command. I have ever believed that such an hour comes to every strong soul, at some crisis in life.

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Silently I handed her my long piece, and buckled about her slender waist my belt with its powder-horn, bullet-purse, and touch-box.

“These,” said I, “are for the enemy. This” — handing her my dagger — “is for thyself. Thou knowest its use. If the gate be broken in, stab thyself to the heart.”

“I will,” she answered, and her voice rang true and steady.

So we met after nigh three years; and so, for the time, we parted.



CHAPTER XVI.

"OUR LADY OF DELIVERANCE."

IT was now twelve o' the clock. From Pory's gate we could see groups of Indians skulking thro' the brush. But their movements seemed uncertain, as though they missed a leader.

I surmised then, what I afterwards learned was the truth, that the signal waited for was the firing of Pocono's gun, announcing that I was slain. They had counted on an easy victory over old Lucas and me, but their plans were disconcerted by the extra men who turned the tide of the fight. The murder of Joan was a blunder on their part, — a mistake to which I owed my life, since 't was on me that the blow was to have fallen. They were waiting now, I judged, for reinforcements which did not come.

The shadow on the dial marked three hours past noon ere the first attack was made. Then, breaking out from the woods, they came on, not in a

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solid column like English soldiery, but from behind every tree and bush like the legions of devils they were, waving their tomahawks and making the forest echo with their wild war-whoop.

"Give them the culverin!" I ordered, and the great guns belched out their fire, killing some, and so affrighting others that they could not stand against the fire, and retreated to the shelter of the trees once more.

Shortly I perceived, skulking around to the weaker side of our wall, a company of a dozen Indians bearing lighted fire-brands.

"Ha," said Pory, "they think to smoke us out like 'possums, do they?"

"Captain Spelman," I said, "take three men, good shots, and follow those fire-brands wherever they go. Move thy men round inside as fast or as slow as they move outside. Pick them off, one by one."

"Ay, sir," was his brief answer. It was done; and so well done that within a half-hour five smouldering brands lay on the ground with five dead and wounded Indians beside them, while the other torch-bearers had retreated to the brush in ignominious defeat.

So far we had lost but four men. Yet was the situation growing ever more and more grave, for

"Our Lady of Deliverance."

who could tell what reinforcements were coming up, or what deeds would be done under cover of the gathering dark.

We were but fifty to their hundreds, and should they attack in force, they must needs conquer. But our successful defence had led them to believe us forewarned and forearmed, and they had a wholesome dread of the garrison of Flower da Hundred, whose fame for discipline and valor was gone abroad amongst the savages far and near.

Several of our men had already had hair-breadth escapes. One was looking through his peep-hole when, of a sudden, an arrow struck him full in the eye, and he ran home howling with pain. Another lost a leg by the exploding of our own gun, and I saw him carried off on a board more dead than alive. For myself, I had the narrowest escape of all.

As I stood near the gate giving orders to a sentry, an arrow struck me square in the breast. Surely it had pierced my heart and stretched me dead on the ground, for I had had no time to don my armour, had I not all unwitting worn a shield.

The point of the arrow was turned: but the picture Betty Romney had given me was shattered into a thousand fragments.

"He shall pay for that," I muttered, as I caught sight of a tawny arm drawing back into the bushes.

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Snatching a gun from the sentry, I fired, and with such aim that I saw the red man fall crashing to earth like some great forest tree when the axe is laid to its roots.

So the battle raged with varying fortunes. At length, just as the sun was setting, Pory came to me. "Wilt thou," said he, "give one order on faith?"

"Ay, forty, if the faith be pinned to thee."

He smiled. "Then," he said, "do thou command every man, when my whistle blows, to cease firing absolutely, and on the instant."

This was I the readier to do that the guns needed cooling, and the ammunition was running low. Pory disappeared, and I sent the orders to every man to do as he had directed.

Dusk was fast falling. The tall pines stood black against the wintry sky. The bodies of the slain lay gaunt upon the barren plain in the waning light. It was a weird scene. Suddenly, above the noise of the fight sounded a shrill whistle. Instantly the report of the firing ceased, and dead silence succeeded.

The effect was unearthly, indescribable. As I paused in breathless suspense, I felt Cupid pull my sleeve. "Look, Mars Humphrey," cried he, almost white with terror; and looking, I saw, rising

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slowly above the wall, a gigantic figure, vast, vague, mysterious as Fate itself, with muffled head, and floating white drapery, and arms outstretched threateningly toward the foe.

I am a man little given to superstition; but I own that as I looked on this giant spectre my brain reeled and my heart stood still.

If to me it was a vision full of awe and terror, what must it have seemed to those savages! With a shriek they turned and fled as from a pestilence. It was a wild stampede. Those who fell were trodden under foot, and Giles Lucas, discharging a culverin into their midst, the blazed path was reddened with gore, so that for years after it was known as "the bloody path."

They fled, and as we watched their rout, a wild passion of exultation seized on us all. In the frenzy of his hatred, Lucas leaped upon the palisado and yelled a parting curse after them. It was his last word. A random arrow fired by a retreating brave, struck him full in the heart, and he fell forward on his face — dead.

He was the last man to fall in the combat.

The fight was won and we were saved. Half dazed over our sudden victory I turned me toward the market place, where I saw women and children crowding around some object on the ground. I

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joined them, and then I, too, stood at gaze; for there, prostrate on the earth lay the spectre which had frightened our foes more than a thousand of ordnance could have done, and put to rout an enemy outnumbering us ten to one.

I laughed when I saw it as men will laugh under such a strain, and 't was long ere I could have done; for behold this terrible apparition was but a well-sweep, dressed out with canvas sheets and stuffed with bolsters and pillows, for all the world like the scare-crows I remembered of old in the farmers' fields at home.

When the people had fairly taken in the meaning of the figure, they gave one mighty shout as Spelman christened it "OUR LADY OF DELIVERANCE." The men formed a triumphal procession, and bore the giant image to the space before the church, where they joined hands in a joyful dance around her. But our men slept on their arms that night, and we doubled the watch at every gate. Mistress Jordon and Elizabeth Romney, who had had no sleep for nigh forty hours, were gone to Thomas Jefferson's house, under promise that they should be wakened if aught befell. For myself, I could not think of sleep, every nerve in my body was wide awake and crying for action. I was fairly aroused. I inspected each bolt, made sure

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that every gun was loaded and primed. Then I came back to the watch-fire, by the side of which Pory had laid himself down with that universal consoler, his pipe.

“ Pory,” said I, accepting the light he offered, and drawing in deep draughts of the fragrancv of the tobacco, “ ’t was a brilliant thought of thine. ‘ Our Lady of Deliverance ’ was a patron saint worthy of the name.”

“ Ay, that she was,” answered Pory; “ but the device was none of mine.”

“ Not thine ? and whose then ? ”

“ It sprang full-fledged from the brain of her whom Mistress Jordon doth call ‘ Sister Elizabeth ! ’ Verily,” he added, “ ’ t is the bravest spirit, and the readiest wit I e’er encountered.”

“ So it was her device,” I murmured ; “ then it is she hath saved Flower da Hundred ! ’ T is to her that we owe our lives.”

“ Then,” was Pory’s most unforeseen response, “ why dost thou not pay thy share of the debt ? ”

“ What ? — how ? — I understand you not.”

Pory, with that vexatious slowness which ever marks smokers, drew three long breaths and puffed them out one by one, ere he replied.

“ If mine eyes deceive me not, and they are not given to playing me false, this Sister Elizabeth is

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none other than Elizabeth Devon, the unwed maid of James City."

I felt myself shaking like a leaf.

"Well, and what then?" said I. "Granting that thou art right, what have I to do with it?"

"Simply this, that like a fool thou hast fallen in love, and like a greater fool, thou hast run away from the woman thou lovest."

"Nay, not a fool either time, John, for I loved a woman worthy to be loved, and I ran away because she loved me not, and my presence hampered and might have greatly harassed her."

"Who said she loved thee not?"

"She told me so herself in round terms."

"How oft?"

"As oft as any woman shall e'er say it to me — once."

"There again art thou not only a fool, but a coward as well. If thou didst storm a fortress which yielded not upon the first assault, wouldst thou raise the siege and run away sulking? Fie, lad! Be a man — write her every morning and tell her every evening that thou wilt never give her up nor cease asking her till she capitulate. That's the way women are won."

"And yet, John," said I, slyly, "thou art still a bachelor at forty odd."

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“I! Oh, yea! My pipe and my pouch and my jug of brown ale are wife enough for me; but I hate to see a man run away from a winning fight, and I say that Elizabeth Devon, whatever she may have said or writ a twelvemonth since, will have thee, if thou ask her now in earnest. I saw her look at thee this day. I heard her say ‘*Humphrey!*’ And then I knew. But make up thy mind quickly! for an thou ask her not within three days, I will win her from thee by the rivalry of a man who is not afraid to ask for what he wants, and to keep on asking till he gets it.”

“Thanks, John!” quoth I, wringing his hand, — “grant me three days, and thou hast my leave to begin.”

“She’s too good for thee.”

“Ay, and for thee.”

“Ay, and for any man — ’tis she who is in very truth OUR LADY OF DELIVERANCE!”



CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH WE BURY OUR DEAD.

THE next few days brought us crushing tidings from all parts of the colony. The massacre had been well planned. At the very instant when the murderous knife fell on Anthony Chester, a hundred tomahawks were raised by hearthstones of households as unsuspecting as ours. In the streets of the towns, on the fields of the lonely plantations, everywhere the knife of the red man fell upon the white.

At Falling Creek, twenty-two were slain; at Mulberry Ile, five; at Martin's Hundred, seventy-three; and at Powel Brook, Captain Powel and twelve others.

Previous kindness availed not to stay the murderer's hand. Master Thorpe was slain, — cruelly, shockingly butchered, — he who had done more than any other toward striving to conciliate the implacable Indian.

In Which we Bury our Dead.

With all these fresh tidings of disaster, a deeper and deeper shadow fell upon our gloom, black enough before. All Flower da Hundred was in mourning. Not a house that did not hang out its symbol of sorrow for some friend or relative slain in that cruel slaughter.

My heart was still further saddened by the news that my faithful friend Oropax, was dead of a fever. Had he lived I should not have been taken thus unwarned.

On the second morning after the massacre, we buried our dead. The heads of Ponto and Pocono were cut off and set upon the walls above the gates as a warning to their tribe, but to their bodies we gave decent burial.

Our own dead were laid in coffins made out of rude boards; but their bareness was hidden by boughs of cedar and hemlock. Mistress Jordon and Elizabeth Romney wrought for Joan Lucas a white shroud of the softest and finest lamb's wool. Wrapped in it she lay still and peaceful, — the troubled brain at rest now, the smooth, white lids closed over the far-seeing eyes, and all earthly visions of trouble and terror shut out forever.

On Captain Chester's coffin, one skilled in such work carved an anchor, and on his heart underneath his doublet I laid — I trust I did no wrong —

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a picture found in Joan's chamber, the double of one borne to the grave on the breast of Giles Lucas.

The funeral was simple yet solemn. The service was read at home within these walls builded by Giles Lucas's own strong arms. After that the whole town did follow the coffins to their final resting-place on a little hillock in the centre of the town before the church.

They were laid in one grave, and over them we raised a cross on which was written : —

TO YE MEMORY
OF
ANTHONY CHESTER
CAPTAIN OF H. M. S. MARGARET AND JOHN
AND OF
GILES LUCAS
AND
JOAN, HIS DEARE DAUGHTER
MURDERED BY YE INDIANS
MARCH YE TWENTY-SECONDE,
1622.

When the sad ceremony was over we repaired to the chapel, where, on bended knees, we did render humble and hearty thanks for the deliverance of our town from the hostile hand of the naturals.

In Which we Bury our Dead.

After this we separated, going every man to his own house.

I was the last to turn away from the door of the church, and as I looked back I saw Elizabeth Romney kneeling beside the new-made grave. Her cloak was slipping back and her hands were clasped as if in prayer.

"Come," said I, going gently to her side, "let not one funeral be the making of another, as so often cometh to pass. The ground is damp and chill, and after thine excitement thou must run no such risks of fever."

"Humphrey," said she, "I have been asking pardon of this dead maid for the cruel and heartless words I said concerning her on that Christmas day when thou didst send Cupid to me with the bear-skin and the letter. 'T is no excuse for me that I was sore vexed."

"Nay, Elizabeth," I answered, soothing her as best I might, for she was much shaken and trembling violently. "She knew naught of thy vexation, and was not of a nature to harbor malice, had she known. I was the only one who felt the sharpness of thy words, which did cut the more deeply because I dreamed not of having vexed thee. Tell me now, I pray thee, wherein I did offend."

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“’T was no offence of thine, only ’tis ever a little hard for the old friend to be forgot for the new.”

“Forgot!” I exclaimed, taking in mine the cold little hand which hung white against her black gown.

“Ah, here you are!” called Ensign Rosingham’s voice from the street. “Mistress Jordon hath sent me in search of ‘Sister Elizabeth’ and laid her commands upon me not to return without her.”

“She is safe with me, as thou mayst report to Mistress Jordon,” said I; “we are coming home at once.”

“Why, then, we may all walk along together,” says he; and finding him no more to be shaken off than a burr that hath set its pricks in thine hosen, I walked along stiff and silent as far as the gate,—my gate, for Master and Mistress Jordon had most kindly consented to my entreaty that they and Elizabeth Romney would tarry with me through those first trying days when every spot seemed haunted. Methinks I could not have borne it to be alone.

Seeing that there was no chance of further speech with Elizabeth, I entered the house leaving her still talking with Rosingham by the gate. Perchance ’tis not her fault that she doth treat every man alike with such graciousness, but ’tis

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none the less vexing to one who would fain believe himself favored above all others.

Could Pory have been right the other night? Could that have been the explanation of the message sent by Cupid? That might match well enough; but what of the letter? Well, I should soon know now!

The house stood silent and empty. I entered the room where Giles Lucas had slept, out of which opened Joan's chamber. There stood her little bed draped in white, and through the snowy curtains drawn across the checkered pane the sunlight played on the deal floor. Lying on the broad window shelf was a little, old, worn Bible. Moved by some sudden impulse I crossed the room and picked it up.

The book opened at a mark made of a gay ribbon I had brought to Joan from a James City market-day fair, and mine eyes fell upon the words: "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.*"



CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RING.

IT was the evening of the third day after the massacre, the event from which we had come to date all things at Flower da Hundred. Coming home from my watch and the drilling of the men, I found Elizabeth Romney sitting by the fire.

“What ! all alone ? ” quoth I.

“Yea, since Mistress Jordon is gone to sit with the little son of Master Jefferson, who is sick. She would not hear of my going, tho’ I was quite as well able as she. She hath a wonderful kindness of heart, tho’ her manner be sometimes light.”

It gave me a sudden thrill to see the maiden seated thus at my hearth-stone as I had seen her so oft in my dreams. She sat with her feet thrust out to the fire, and her hands clasped one in other, palm upward, in her lap.

As I drew up my chair opposite her and stretched my hands toward the friendly blaze, I noticed with

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a shock how ill she looked. Dark lines had gathered under her eyes, and the pupils were large and distended.

"You are ill," said I; "I see it as well as Mistress Jordon. You are worn out, and should even now be in bed and under the influence of a sleeping potion."

But she only shook her head. "Nay," said she, "I feel as if I should never sleep again; and in truth, I scarce wish to, lest my slumbers be haunted by the sights I have witnessed and the sounds mine ears have heard.

"It must have been just there," she added, shuddering as she pointed to a dark spot on the boards, "that Captain Chester sat, and there he fell dead upon the floor. To think that but for the chance of the moment, it might have been thou!"

"Ay, and why the worthier life should have been sacrificed, I know not. But come," I added, moving my chair so that it covered the blood-stains on the floor upon which Elizabeth's eyes were fixed, "since memory is working so strongly in both of us to-night, let us drive her further afield, and try which of us hath the livelier remembrance of old days. I do remember thee in a sprigged chintz dress, and scarlet shoes, playing by the brook at Cumnor Hall."

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"And I," said she, brightening, "do recall thee, in thy suit of tawny velvet, riding thy horse, 'Prince Charley,' at a break-neck gallop across the downs by the sea; and I remember how thou didst laugh at my fears, and only urged on thy horse the more to prance and curvet when I screamed and clapped my hands to mine eyes."

"And I do recall one day years after, when I rode under thy window, and thou didst throw down to me, having first touched it with thy lips, a sprig of lad's-love."

"Nay, nay! 'T was no lad's-love; 't was maiden's-pride."

"Indeed!" quoth I, "and was it so? 'T is rare that such a question is not outlawed after ten years; but I have evidence not to be gainsaid, and I do here desire leave to lay it before the Court."

With this I pulled forth from my breast the packet which I had worn next my heart for more than three years, the bitter and the sweet together; the lad's-love and the lady's letter. Sooth to say, I had clean forgot how the flower was wrapped, but as I opened it out, her quick eye caught the seal upon the paper.

"Why, 't is the Romney arms!" quoth she.

"Ay," answered I, "and why not, since 't was a Romney hand that writ the letter?"

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"Faith, I comprehend not this puzzle. Is it from my father's hand?"

"Nay, mistress, I were scarce like to carry thy father's writing round the world with me. But thy words —"

"*My* words?"

"Ay, thine, and crueller did no maiden's pen ever trace."

"Give me the letter — quick!"

"Why, there, then! Take it! Perchance 't is so common for hearts to be in the way of thy foot that thou canst scarce remember which one it was that thou didst tread on three years since."

She snatched the letter from my hand and bent near the fire to read it the more clearly. I watched the firelight play on her little ear and along the delicate line of her throat. Having finished the letter she folded it slowly, and handed it back to me with an air of deep disdain.

"And thou," she said scornfully, "didst think that I could write such stuff as that! — *I* — Elizabeth Romney! Why, my chamber-maid would write better to my lacquey. At least, she would put her cross to nothing so cheap, so poor, so unmaidenly!"

I sat there, frozen stiff by the coldness of her scorn. The letter not hers! She denies it! The

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room whirled round and round as my brain strove to take in the thought. At length I burst out, —

“ Then, in God’s name, who did write it if thou didst not ? ”

“ I know not and I care not. That which bites into my soul like acid into iron is the thought that thou shouldst know me so little. Thinkest thou if that same Jesuit priest, who, as mine instinct tells me, did devise this letter in my name, had come to me with a bit of writing which did proclaim Humphrey Huntoon over his own signature a thief or a coward, think’st thou I would have credited the false witness ? Not though it bore the seal of thy house on every page. I would have gone to thee, — not to insult thee with the question if it were true ; but to inquire of thee how best to discover and punish the liar who had taken thy name thus in vain.”

She was magnificent as she uttered these words. A bright red spot flamed in either cheek ; her eyes dilated and her head was thrown back as if to defy a world and hold it at bay. I felt utterly abashed and humbled.

“ And yet,” said I, falteringly, “ I did receive it from thine own father’s hand.”

I repented me bitterly of the words as soon as spoken, for I saw a quick look of anguish on her

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face. A sudden pallor followed the red flush of maidenly pride, and her head sinking on her arm, she fell to sobbing low but deep.

“O Humphrey! And he told me that thou hadst left England partly to seek thy future, but still more because thou didst suspect I cared for thee more than maiden should, whereas thy feeling for me was but that of a brother for a sister.”

“He — Did he dare to say that? He shall repent it!”

“Hush, Humphrey! Hast thou taken no note of this?” and she pointed downward to her mourning gown.

“I had noted it indeed,” said I, with sudden enlightenment; but methought ’t was worn but in harmony with our mourning world here at Flower da Hundred.”

“Nay, ’t is worn for my father. A letter from my cousin a fortnight since told me of his death, — how he fell from his chair at table and never did speak word more. So you see he died without forgiving me. ’T is passing hard! And now I must go home and live alone in that old Hall, echoing with the memories of the past. I shall grow old and ugly and bitter as Bess of Hardwick.”

Her face as she spoke thus wore such a look of settled gloom as made me resolve to prick her out

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of melancholy though it roused her to anger. Wrath I could bear, but not this despair.

"Elizabeth Romney," said I, "thou art a riddle past my solving. A thousand times since Fate threw us together once more so strangely here in the wilderness, have I longed to ask thee to solve thine own mystery for me. Oft would I have spoken, but straightway after each word of kindness, each genial glance, thou hast suddenly frozen again. Before a poor mortal could warm himself in the sun, behold the snow was falling."

"Perchance," said she, turning her face toward me on her arm, with the eyes still downcast, but the shadow of a dimple showing in her cheek, "perchance the mortal was so slow that Summer turned to Winter while he delayed."

"Ay," said I, "I am slow, but by heavens! I am slower to yield than to win. I swear I will wait for thee till Winter turn to Summer again. O child, child, have you not made me suffer enough? See, Elizabeth, here is the ring my mother bade me place on the finger of my betrothed wife, the ring thou didst return to me on Chantro's arrow. Now it is come back to thee again. Wilt thou wear it?"

Silently and all trembling she held out her hand; and kneeling there beside her in this spot, doubly

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hallowed by love and death, I slipped the star sapphire on her finger, and kissed fervently as reverently the hand given thus into my keeping.

"Humphrey, forgive my father!" she whispered.

"Thy people," I answered, "are henceforth my people, and to the dead all things are forgiven."

My head was bowed upon the arm of her chair, and she laid her hand upon my hair, and silence born of happiness too deep for words, fell upon us.

"And so," she said at length, twinkling off the tears, for she could never be serious long at a time, "my nurse's tale comes true after all, 'And they married and lived happy ever after.'"

While she was yet speaking, Master and Mistress Jordon, and after them Spelman and Pory, entered the room. Mistress Betty, who loveth not to lay bare her feelings, laid her fingers on her lips to beckon me to silence; but Pory's eye was too quick for her.

"I do commend thee, Sister Elizabeth," quoth he, "when thou wouldst beckon thy lover to keep silence concerning thy betrothal, do it not with the finger which weareth his *ring*."

"Faith," said I, rising, but with no haste, "ye are come in good time, friends, to wish us 'God speed.'" Then, amid much wonderment and many explanations we all fell to shaking hands, and Mis-

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tress Cicely kissed and cried over Betty Romney, and drew her away with her to her chamber.

At the door, however, Mrs. Jordon paused, and shaking her finger at me, with something of her old lightness which had fallen from her of late, she said, smiling, —

“ I have a lecture for thee yet. I have not forgot that day at Jordon’s Journey, when thou didst lead poor innocent me on to talk of Sister Elizabeth. Look to him well, Betty, lest he cozen thee as completely as he did me that day. I can see him yet, as he sat there with his eyes shut, striving to conjure up this unknown being. Oh, my description was wondrous vivid, so he said. A fraud, Betty, an arrant knave, — I wish thee joy of him ! ”

With these words the door closed upon the women, and we saw neither Mistress Cicely nor Betty Romney more that night.

.
We were married in the little chapel. I remember as in a dream the friendly faces, the strains of the wedding hymn, and the voice of the white-robed priest, as joining our hands, he did reverently pray to the Author of everlasting life: “ Send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this man and this woman whom we bless in thy name ; that, as Isaac and Rebecca lived faithfully together, so

The Ring

these persons may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made, whereof this ring, given and received, is a token and a pledge."

As the priest spake these words, a ray of sunlight struck through the tiny panes of the diamonded window, full on the star sapphire in its setting of gold, as it lay there on the finger of Elizabeth Romney. Thus it rested while the final words were said: —

"What God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

THE END.

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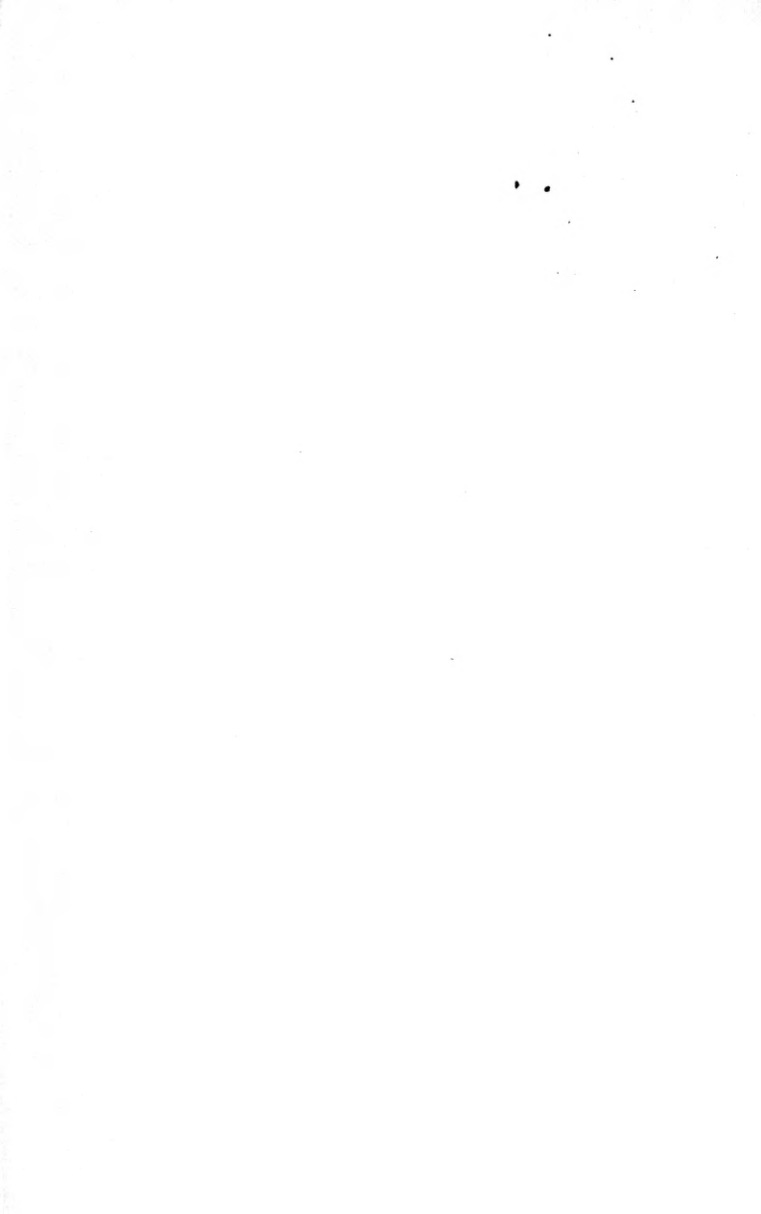
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